

Arafat receives death threat in London

LONDON (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat received a death threat shortly after arriving in London to attend the Middle East peace talks, sources close to the Palestinian delegation said late on Monday.

Soon after arriving at his central London hotel in the early hours of Monday, Mr. Arafat was warned by an English-speaking caller that he would be assassinated during his stay in London, the sources said.

They added that British security forces had been notified of the death threat, and that extra measures to protect the Palestinian leader had been put in place.

Scotland Yard refused to comment on the death threat or the level of police protection for Mr. Arafat.

"We don't discuss personal security matters," a spokesman said.

On Monday, the German officials visited the base of an elite Israeli anti-terrorism unit, but the tactics demonstrated for them were a military secret.

Because Israel has such extensive experience in coping with terrorist attacks, German officials are particularly interested in its tactics, said Israel border police spokesman Yehoshua Bauer.

On Wednesday, Major General Jack Dacot, head of Israel's border guard and the German officials' host, will take them to the West Bank to observe a special Israeli unit whose troops disguise themselves in Arab dress to gather intelligence.

7:20Sharjah (AH)
0:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
0:40 Damascus, Amsterdam (KL)
4:00Beirut, Athens (OA)

Loyal Wings (RW)
8:00Aqaba (from
Marka Airport) (RW)
7:30Tel Aviv (from
Marka Airport) (RW)
2:50Aqaba (from
Marka Airport) (RW)

MAY FAIR

Annual fair of the British Association of Aruman in the gardens of the Ambassador's residence, Zahran Street, from May 8 (11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.). There will be a grand raffle, games, entertainment, refreshments and home-made products. All proceeds will go to local charities.

what's going

Princess Sarvath returns from Qatar

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Sarvath returned home Tuesday after concluding a three-day official visit to Qatar during which she held talks with Qatari officials on education, health and women-related issues.

Princess Sarvath visited several Qatari educational institutions and called for the exchange of experience between the two countries in areas such as speech and learning difficulties.

In her meeting with Qatari Minister of Education and Higher Education Mohammad Kafoud, Princess Sarvath discussed issues pertaining to the exchange of teachers and allocating seats at the Phonetics Research Centre at the University of Jordan for teachers and educationalists from Qatar.

Her talks also touched upon the Crown Prince's Award and cooperation between Princess Sarvath College and Qatari educational institutions.

The princess called at the Qatari national museum and the aquarium.

Princess Sarvath, accompanied by HRH Princess Rahmah, made the visit upon an invitation by Sheikhah Mozhah, wife of Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad.



Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi opens the conference (Petra photo)

Kurdi announces 10-year plan to fight heart disease

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Cardiac Society Tuesday opened a three-day international conference at the Radisson SAS Hotel with the participation of delegates from Arab and foreign countries.

Deputising for His Majesty King Hussein, Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi opened the meeting, at which 60 working papers are to be reviewed.

Outlining the major strides Jordan has made in the medical profession, Dr. Kurdi noted that in the past 20

years, the Kingdom has established itself as a regional medical hub offering advanced treatment to thousands of citizens from Arab states.

Jordan's specialists are in constant contact with the world of medicine for updates on the latest developments in the field, he said, enabling the country's hospitals to provide advanced medical services.

Describing heart disease as one of the main killer diseases in Jordan, Dr. Kurdi said the ministry has prepared a 10-year plan to help

citizens avoid the disease by encouraging sound lifestyles.

The president of the Jordan Medical Association, Bassam Dajani, outlined the association's long-term plans and programmes, which include seminars and conferences involving delegates from developed countries to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences.

On the sidelines of the conference, Dr. Kurdi opened an exhibition of various Arab and foreign-made drugs and medical equipment.

Cabinet reviews King's visit to Tunisia

AMMAN (Petra) — The Council of Ministers Tuesday reviewed the outcome of His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Tunisia as well as the results of the Joint Jordanian-Tunisian Higher Committee meeting, during which the two sides updated a 1995 economic and trade agreement.

Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Hani Mulki told the press after the regular Cabinet session that the joint committee concluded a number of protocols on Tunisian-Jordanian cooperation in the areas of investment and increasing bilateral tourist and agricultural exchanges.

Dr. Mulki said the Cabinet also reviewed the outcome of a visit to Washington by a Jordanian delegation two weeks ago, during which topics connected with the protection of intellectual property rights were discussed.

The Washington meeting

resulted in agreement on working out an executive programme for Jordan to adopt internationally accepted criteria related to intellectual property rights to end at a time coinciding with Jordan's entry into the World Trade Organisation, Dr. Mulki said.

The Council approved a draft law on industry and trade and referred it to Parliament, according to the minister, who noted that the new draft provides for regulations concerning encouraging competition and boosting national production.

Dr. Mulki said the Cabinet has ended discussion on several articles of the anti-trust law, which will be referred to Parliament by next week.

On his meetings Monday with Israeli Industry Minister Natan Sharansky, Dr. Mulki said their discussions covered customs problems hindering Jordanian exports, particularly cement, to Israel and the

self-rule regions of Palestine. Dr. Mulki announced that the Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli ministers of industry will hold a meeting in Amman before the end of this month to follow up discussions on trade.

Also at the meeting, the Council of Ministers approved the Jordanian-European Association Agreement, which was signed by the two parties in Brussels last November.

The agreement aims at promoting cultural, social and economic ties between Jordan and the countries of the European Union and improving the living conditions in the Kingdom, enhancing productivity and encouraging regional cooperation.

The Council, which met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, appointed former minister Abdul Razzak Tubeishat as government rep-

resentative to the Jordan Farmers Association.

The ministers approved an executive programme on cultural and scientific cooperation between Jordan and Sudan covering 1998-2000 and authorised Minister of Education and Higher Education Mohammad Hamdan to sign the agreement.

The Council formed a delegation representing the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) to conduct studies on the Romanian and Hungarian markets' demand for Jordanian agricultural products. The delegation will visit the countries for this purpose from May 17-24.

The Cabinet also formed a delegation led by Minister of Transport Sami Gammoh to take part in a seminar organised by the International Civil Aviation Organisation from May 24-28 in Cairo to discuss questions related to travellers' safety.

FAO grants \$283,000 in aid to agricultural corporation

AMMAN (Petra) — The Rome-based U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has decided to give the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) \$283,000 in technical aid to help establish a data system to organise credit facilities in the rural regions of Jordan.

ACC Director General Nimer Nabulsi, who made the announcement Tuesday, said the grant entails providing equipment to and training personnel at four ACC branches in the first stage.

He noted the technical aid is part of an agreement signed earlier by Jordan and the FAO.

Mr. Nabulsi added that the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has promised to provide the ACC with technical aid to help develop its computer system.

Speaking after an ACC board meeting chaired by Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Kheisra, Mr. Nabulsi said the board discussed a report on the ACC's finances, the closing accounts of the past year and ACC activities.

Referring to loans provided to Jordanian farmers, Mr. Nabulsi pointed out that the corporation's assets were estimated at JD96.1 million at the end of last year while the total volume of outstanding and uncollected loans to farmers amounted to JD87 million.

But he said the ACC last year provided 6,707 farmers with JD16.8 million in loans and collected JD19.9 million in repayments, an amount that registered an increase of 9.3 per cent over the 1996 figure.

The board has adopted a new approach by directing 82 per cent of its loans to small farmers, who Mr. Nabulsi said were using the money to develop lands and water resources, purchase farm equipment, increase livestock wealth and poultry production, and build agricultural installations.

According to Mr. Nabulsi, small farmers in the badia and rural regions of Jordan receive JD2,000-3,000 loans.

Groundbreaking ceremony held for new Wadi Mousa wastewater plant

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Tuesday began work on the \$26.7 million Wadi Mousa treatment plant, the first and largest project of an extended programme to increase water supplies to the area's inhabitants.

The project was officially launched at a cornerstone-laying ceremony at the construction site by Minister of Water and Irrigation Muthair Haddadin and visiting USAID administrator Brian Atwood.

When completed, the overall water system project, estimated at \$43 million, will provide the 17,000 residents of Wadi Mousa, Taiba, Um Sayhoun, and Beida with 1.25 million cubic metres per year of treated wastewater for agricultural use.

In remarks at the ceremony, Dr. Haddadin stressed the importance of this project and praised the cooperation between Jordan and USAID.

Mr. Atwood said the treat-

ment project represented the culmination of two years of intensive design efforts financed by Jordan and USAID, which is contributing \$25 million.

"Working together to ensure the more efficient management and use of water resources is one of the major goals of the USAID programme in Jordan," Mr. Atwood remarked.

Last month, Dr. Haddadin and USAID signed four contracts, two with Jordanian firms and two with American companies, to construct the plant.

According to William McDonnell, the project manager of one of the American firms, the plant and the wastewater collection system will be built in three stages. The first consists of the actual plant, which will be able to process 3,400 cubic metres of wastewater per day. In the second stage, four wastewater pump stations will be built in each of the four towns covered by the project, Wadi Mousa, Taiba, B. Doui, and Beida. The third stage will feature the construction of a

13.5-kilometre wastewater main to carry sewage to the new wastewater treatment plant, located at Sad Um Al Hiran, just outside Petra.

As part of the construction of the new water system, a number of construction projects will be carried out. These include, pumping substations in the area, reservoirs, network replacements, and wastewater collection systems.

The German and French governments are also providing \$10 million to finance the water system network for the Wadi Mousa area.

In addition to local residents, the project aims at supplying water to the region's hotels. There are at present 26 existing hotels with 2,700 beds in the area, and it predicted that by the year 2010 there will be approximately 40 hotels with 4,000 beds in the Wadi Mousa area.

"It is therefore crucial that adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is in place before the growing tourism industry overwhelms the present system," said the project's feasibility study.

Conference on integrating disabled into society ends

By Suha Ma'ayeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A two-day conference entitled "Changing Disability Services in a Changing Society" ended yesterday by examining means of integrating people with special needs into the community.

Patricia Ericsson, a consultant from the Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief (SOIR), which organised the conference, told the Jordan Times that the seminar was held to mark over 30 years of Swedish work in Jordan.

"The foreign speakers who discussed different aspects of their research focused on how [disabled] services are changing to meet the demands of the changing society," she said.

"In all societies there are many cases of mental retardation. The SOIR has decided to leave the institutional approach and integrate people with special needs into society," Ms. Ericsson added.

The SOIR is a private, non-governmental organisation (NGO) founded in Sweden

which aims at helping individuals who cannot obtain relief through other sources. It started its activities in Jordan in 1966 at the request of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

"We have been working with mentally retarded people in several countries in the Middle East," said Orjan Ekman, SOIR chairman. "It's an important part of our work to provide training for students and staff working in the field."

There are special teachers from the SOIR who are working with community-based rehabilitation projects in eight refugee camps.

"We want to open services close to where people with special needs live and have teachers with them to help them," Mr. Ekman added.

He stressed that severely mentally retarded people are neglected in comparison to other groups with disabilities.

"If you take different cases of disability across the world, the mentally retarded receive low priority, and the severely mentally retarded come last," he said.

Wa'el Mas'oud, dean of Princess Rahma College for Social Work at Balqa Applied Sciences University, said it is important to integrate people with special needs into society.

Dr. Mas'oud explained that a child with special needs should be offered services from the community, a new trend across the globe.

"It is our role to qualify teachers in terms of teaching methods and acknowledging the special needs and how to deal with them," Dr. Mas'oud said.

"It is important that schools accept people with special needs as it is difficult for children living in remote areas to obtain their education," he added.

Dr. Mas'oud highlighted the importance of psychological support for the families and providing them with adequate information because they are an essential part in the process of integrating their children into society.

The conference was organised in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Development and the National Council for the Welfare of the Disabled.

U.N. advisor says legislation on honour crimes violates international law

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A criminal and corruption consultant and field advisor at the United Nations said he was outraged by crimes of honour committed against women in Jordan and slammed legislation dealing with such offences.

Michael Hartmann, also assistant district attorney, Sex Crimes Prosecution Team (rape, child molestation and murder) in San Francisco, California, said current legislation dealing with such crimes violated human rights and international treaties.

"I believe that any law which provides defence to a crime based on gender is a violation of human rights and also violates several international agreements," he told the Jordan Times in an interview on Monday.

Mr. Hartmann was referring to Article 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code (No. 16, 1960), which provides reduced or waived penalties to persons found guilty of killing female relatives who commit adultery or are found in an adulterous situation, such as talking to a stranger.

"It is shocking to me that if a man kills his female relative and her lover after seeing them with his own eyes consenting to sex, he can then be told by the law he did nothing wrong," he said.

If the law does not set the



Michael Hartmann

death penalty for adultery, then "why should it encourage a male relative to deliver the death penalty for the same thing?" he asked.

A total of 25 women were killed in the Kingdom in the name of honour last year, mostly on suspicion of illicit relationship — a major point of criticism by international human rights organisations.

This year, a total of nine women have been murdered by male relatives to cleanse family honour.

Mr. Hartmann is currently on a fact-finding mission to Jordan to see if he can help the Kingdom improve legislation dealing with domestic violence and child abuse.

The expert, who said he has helped several countries restructure their judiciary, stressed that he was mainly interested in reforming criminal laws, especially laws deal-

ing with women and children as well as domestic and sexual violence.

"I am here because I was invited by the United States Information Service (USIS) to assist in any way I can in Jordan, based on my understanding of the interaction of the criminal law and human rights," Mr. Hartmann said.

The Ministry of Justice is putting the final touches on a draft penal code that is expected to tighten penalties on individuals committing crimes against women and children.

Mr. Hartmann said the interest the government has taken in preventing violence against women and children needs to be supported by reforms to the criminal laws and emergency protection orders (restraining orders).

Mr. Hartmann, a law professor at Boak Hall School of Law for seven years, said he met with the National Task Force for Children (NTFC), which recently completed drafting laws dealing with sexual molestation and violence against children.

"I was impressed with their progressive and sort out solutions," he said.

The legislation committee at the NTFC, chaired by Her Majesty Queen Noor, recently finished drafting Jordan's Rights of Child Act, which urges the government to provide all necessary conditions to ensure a proper upbringing for children.

The proposed law stipulates that the government should guarantee childhood development and care, which it says is a national, religious and human commitment that stems from spiritual and social values.

Mr. Hartmann said he was impressed with the Family Protection Unit that was established by the Public Security Department in September to deal with domestic violence.

He said its staff and facilities matched those found in similar U.S. institutions.

"I hope that the Jordanian government will continue to support further training of the police, medical personnel and prosecutors so that law enforcement objectives and human rights goals as to treatment of victims can work together to provide safety and dignity for women and children who are victims of violence," he said.

Mr. Hartmann, who travelled to several countries to learn about their judiciary and help reform their justice systems, said he had his own concept concerning the rights of the accused and the victims.

He said nations all over the world needed to look at other justice systems to learn from them and to quote some of their articles.

"It is dangerous for any nation to focus and think that they do not need to learn from other systems, including the U.S.," he stressed.

Court verdict on Shbeilat expected next week

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The State Security Court, trying opposition leader Leith Shbeilat on charges of sparking pro-Iraqi unrest in the southern town of Ma'an in February, is expected to declare its verdict on May 12, a judicial source said Tuesday.

The source declined further comment.

If convicted, Mr. Shbeilat, former president of the Engineers Association, could get up to four months in jail, lawyers said.

He was released last month on JD2,000 bail after six weeks

in detention. Mr. Shbeilat's defence attorney, Hussein Mjalli, Monday rested his case at a State Security Court session on Monday and asked for his client's acquittal.

Al Arab Al Yawm newspaper on Tuesday quoted Attorney Mjalli as saying in his closing argument that Mr. Shbeilat's case was politically motivated and was aimed at "restricting the freedom of speech and expression that is guaranteed by the constitution."

Mr. Mjalli also criticised the court's decision to ban press coverage of Mr. Shbeilat's trial.

the newspaper said.

In March of this year, the state prosecutor asked Jordanian newspapers not to publish any information related to Mr. Shbeilat's trial.

Mr. Shbeilat, a former deputy, was detained by police on his way back to Amman after delivering a sermon at Ma'an's main mosque a day before pro-Iraqi unrest broke out in the southern town.

One Jordanian died and dozens more were injured in two days of violence, forcing the government to impose a six-day curfew on the desert town.

The government blamed Mr.

Shbeilat for inciting the unrest.

Mr. Shbeilat was pardoned twice by His Majesty King Hussein, in 1992 and 1996, after receiving prison terms ranging from three years to life imprisonment on charges of treason and lese majeste.

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Syrian-Israeli talks would have led to Golan withdrawal — Savir

(Continued from page 1)

Rabin that had to be met by the Syrians: security arrangements, normalisation, and an agreed-upon timetable, in addition to several other factors such as economic and water issues, said Mr. Savir.

"On none of these issues were our demands fully met, least of all in the area of security arrangements," he stated.

"Having said that, we were still in the midst of negotiations when they broke off, and I felt that at the Wye plantation [the site of the negotiations] we had the momentum going in the right direction."

"Negotiations [between Israel and Syria] should be renewed where they left off," Mr. Savir said.

Despite differences in the thinking of

President Hafez Assad and Shimon Peres, a common understanding of the term "comprehensive" had been reached between the Israeli and Syrian negotiators two years ago, he noted.

"The way it was formulated at the time, orally, was that a Syrian-Israeli peace, and a Lebanese-Israeli peace would bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It would be matched by normalisation between Arab countries and Israel. That was very fundamental," remarked Mr. Savir.

On the Oslo peace process of which he was a main architect, Mr. Savir said he believed that a "crisis of trust" between the Palestinians and Israelis exists and that "a sense of partnership has to be restored." But he insisted that although

the peace process was in "bad shape, it is still alive."

Mr. Savir dismissed allegations that the Oslo process has failed as a confidence-building measure. He said, however, that final status issues should be tackled soon since the May 1999 deadline, after which the Oslo accords terminate, was approaching.

According to Mr. Savir, a national unity government between the Likud and Labour parties would have to be formed prior to discussions on final status issues.

Jordan's role in final status negotiations is a "purely Jordanian decision," Mr. Savir remarked. However, he expected that the Kingdom would have to be involved in various aspects of the final agreement.

But Jordan "can and should come in" after final status agreements, when water, energy, and social issues will have to be tackled, added Mr. Savir.

Asked if a federation or confederation between Jordan and the West Bank was an Israeli precondition for a Palestinian state, Mr. Savir noted that there is a growing understanding in both the Labour and Likud parties that it is up to a future Palestinian "entity" to decide what kind of relationship it would have with Jordan.

Mr. Savir is currently involved in the Peres Centre for Peace set up by Mr. Peres last year to enhance regional cooperation in the fields of economics, agriculture, peace education, and information technology.

European Court rejects British beef ban challenge

LUXEMBOURG (AFP) — The European Court of Justice Tuesday rejected Britain's challenge to the legality of the two-year-old worldwide ban on its beef exports.

Britain had challenged the embargo on two points — that the European Commission had overstepped its powers and that the action was disproportionate to the actual threat to human health posed by the disease.

Both arguments were rejected by the Court, which handles disputes over the interpretation of the various treaties on which the European Union is based and legislation arising from them.

Tuesday's ruling follows the first moves to ease the two-year-old embargo. EU governments agreed in March that Britain could resume exports of certain categories of beef produced in Northern Ireland.

The EU imposed a worldwide embargo on British

beef exports on March 27, 1996, after the British government revealed a probable link between Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) — "mad cow" disease — and a new strain of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), a fatal brain-wasting condition in humans.

Given that CJD was a fatal condition with no known cure, the commission could not be said to have overreacted, the court said.

In line with this it rejected Britain's argument that Brussels had acted to protect beef producers in the rest of Europe rather than in the interests of public health.

At the time Britain announced the link, scientists said that the BSE epidemic in British cattle could eventually lead to thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of Britons dying of new variant CJD.

These fears have not been realised. To date 25 Britons have died of the disease and

the most recent estimate from the government's scientific advisors is that between 100 and 1,500 people will die of CJD as a result of eating BSE-infected beef products.

BSE was first recognised in British cattle in the mid 1980s. It is thought now to have developed as a result of the remains of sheep infected with the related disease scrapie being ground up and used for cattle feed.

To date, more than 170,000 British cattle have been diagnosed as having contracted the disease. This compares with a total of less than a thousand in the 14 other EU countries.

The incidence of the disease in British herds is however now rapidly diminishing following the implementation of a ban on the use of meat and bone meal in feed, a massive cull of cattle exposed to BSE and the introduction of strict new slaughtering controls.

From a peak of 36,682

cases in 1992, the number of new cases of BSE is expected to fall to less than 2,000 this year and less than 100 by 2001, according to the British government projections.

The decision to lift the ban on beef from Northern Ireland reflects the much lower incidence of BSE among the province's herds, which are mainly grass-fed.

Northern Ireland also has a long-standing computer-based registration system for cattle which makes it much easier to provide a guarantee that they have never come into contact with BSE-infected animals.

A similar accord to ease the ban for beef from cattle in other parts of Britain which have been certified as BSE-free is expected by the end of this year.

Progress could be faster if scientists from EU governments agree to officially recognise one of the two BSE diagnostic tests currently being developed in Switzerland and Ireland.



Riot police battle with students during an anti-government protest at Parahyangan University in Bandung, 120 kilometres southeast of Jakarta. About 500 students participated in the protest in which several were injured (Reuters photo)

Mob torches shops in riot-torn Indonesian town

MEDAN, Indonesia (AFP) — Soldiers were rushed to the western Indonesian city of Medan after a mob torched shops there Tuesday following a night of violence by protesters angered at fuel price rises, residents said.

A mob of more than 100 people set several shops in Sutrisno Street on fire and soldiers have been rushed to the area, a resident of the North Sumatra capital said.

The shops were mostly owned by ethnic Chinese, the resident said, adding that people found in the shops were beaten up, regardless of their race, before the buildings were set on fire.

Mobs also attacked two offices of the state electricity company PT PLN in east Medan, pelting the offices and the company's vehicles, a PLN official at another office in Medan said.

In Jakarta 17 students of the Mercu Buana private university were wounded by rubber-coated bullets as police tried to disperse

a protest by some 5,000 students against the fuel price rises and President Suharto's economic management.

Meanwhile earlier Tuesday hundreds of students at the city's Teachers' University, closed until May 7 following violent clashes with security forces.

Monday, burned tyres in front of their campus, a WTN journalist who witnessed the incident said.

Security was tight at the site but security forces did not intervene, the journalist said, adding hundreds of onlookers cheered the students.

The unrest was sparked by a government announcement Monday of immediate fuel price increases of up to 71 per cent and a 60 per cent rise in electricity rates over the next six months.

This follows the elimination of subsidies in keeping with IMF-imposed conditions as part of an economic restructuring plan. The PLN official in Medan,

who declined to be named, said the mob was angered by the electricity price rise.

Another Medan resident said armoured vehicles and trucks filled with soldiers and police were roaming the city or guarding strategic locations.

"The atmosphere downtown is tense," the resident said. A mob of more than 1,000 was marching towards Pulau Brayan, an industrial area on the way to the port, she said.

The mob was yelling "scrap the fuel and electricity rise" and chanting anti-government slogans.

At least 13 vehicles including two security vehicles were burned as hundreds of people joined protesting students in a central shopping district of Medan Monday.

At least five people were injured by rubber-coated bullets while several others sustained bruises from police and military beatings, a witness said.

Beijing starts official countdown for Macau handover

BEIJING (AFP) — China Tuesday unveiled a massive clock to show the world it was counting the seconds until the return of the Portuguese enclave of Macau in 1999, the next territory to be welcomed back into the fold after last year's Hong Kong handover.

Identical to the clock that marked the time passing to Hong Kong's return, the Macau timepiece graces the entrance to the Chinese Revolution History Museum in Tiananmen Square, where momentous events in Chinese history are duly recorded.

The huge red clock, marked with the five-star symbol used on the national flag, appeared on the same day China's handover preparatory committee was to hold its first meeting.

Like its counterpart for the Hong Kong handover, the group is charged with organising the new government, legislative council and judiciary under Chinese rule. It will also prepare the Dec. 20, 1999, ceremony marking the return of Macau to Chinese sovereignty.

Sixty of the 100 members are from Macau, which keeps China safely within the bounds of an earlier promise that "no fewer than 50 per cent" of the members of the committee must be natives, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

How much dissent is to be allowed on the committee remains an open question, however.

"The committee will take into consideration whatever opinions there might be, so long as they are conducive to China's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Macau, to the implementation of the basic law and for the benefits of the Macau residents," pledged Wang Qiren.

Mr. Wang is the vice-chairman of the preparatory committee and director of the Xinhua news agency's Macau branch and his comments leave wide room for interpretation.

Hopes have been stirred recently that under Chinese rule, the island's government will make more progress stamping out violent crime than it has under Portuguese tutelage.

"In conflict ... in spite of all the violence, it's not going to last very long. I think that now that the government has taken action, everything will improve considerably," said gambling tycoon and preparatory committee member Stanley Ho at the clock ceremony. He added that he anticipates a smooth transition.

A frontrunner for the post of Macau's first post-colonial chief executive, Ho said he expects law and order to improve after the handover and complained that the current government was responsible for the organised crime problem, a Hong Kong newspaper reported.

Macau has been rocked by gang violence over the past 18 months as rival triad groups fight turf wars for control of lucrative gambling and prostitution rackets.

The Portuguese enclave's handback is to follow the same "one country, two systems" principle used for Hong Kong, under which Beijing guarantees an unchanged way of life and a high degree of autonomy for 50 years.

Beijing is hoping the successful application of the formula in Macau's case — following the smooth handover of Hong Kong — will tempt Taiwan into agreeing to reunification on a similar basis.

So far, however, Taiwan has shown no enthusiasm for the "one-country, two-systems" formula. Beijing has repeatedly offered it, but the overtures have been rejected by Taipei, which insists on political equality.

Imperial China ceded Macau — a peninsula and two small islands adjacent to southern Guangdong province — to Portugal in 1557.



Serbian policemen take cover after an incident on a murder case near the village of Kocani on Monday as a so-called full-scale war could erupt in the region.

Serb. Albanian kill

PRISTINA, Kosovo (AFP) — An ethnic Albanian was killed in Kosovo Tuesday in a shooting incident, a Serbian media centre said. The victim, a 25-year-old Albanian, was killed by a Serbian soldier near his family home in a village near Pristina, the centre said. The soldier, a 20-year-old, was also killed. The incident occurred during a period of tension between the two groups.

Japanese defence closer military tie

THE HAGUE (AFP) — The head of Japan's defence ministry, Koizumi, Tuesday said Japan was working to strengthen its military ties with the United States. He said that Japan was looking for ways to improve its military capabilities and to work more closely with the US in the Pacific region.

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Four dead, nine injured in fire aboard Australian navy ship

PERTH, Australia (AFP) — Four sailors died and nine were injured in one of Australia's worst peacetime naval accidents when a fireball swept through the engine room of the supply vessel Westralia.

Crew members spent 90 minutes fighting the blaze as frigates, tugs and a submarine surrounded the stricken vessel in the ocean before the fire was contained by flooding the hold with foam.

All ships in the area were ordered to assist with fire-fighting equipment and medical supplies. The fire broke out when crew were working on a ruptured fuel line during trials eight nautical miles northwest of the Western Australian port of Fremantle.

Three men and one woman died almost instantly, Commander Alan Johnston said, adding that the blaze had caused major damage to the ship.

A medical officer was transferred to the boat by helicopter to help the injured crew who were treated for burns, smoke

inhalation and shock before being taken to a Perth hospital, he said.

Thick smoke prevented rescuers from reaching the dead for several hours.

"The ship's firefighting team attempted to put the fire out but they were forced back by the flames and smoke," Cmdr. Johnston told a news conference.

"Initial reports of four missing are confirmed and it is my melancholy duty to inform we have four bodies as a result of that search."

A hospital spokesman said injured survivors "are terribly upset about what happened on the Westralia this morning."

"This has been a terrible experience for them. The ship took on some water and was listing and it was a little while before the navy was able to fly them out."

"They're all in nervous shock. Some of them are on oxygen, some of them have drips, one of them has had some anaesthetics."

The 40,870-tonne Westralia, the Australian navy's largest vessel, was fully laden with 20,000

tonnes of fuel before deployment in South East Asia Wednesday.

It was purchased from the British Royal Navy in 1989.

Defence Minister Ian McLachlan said the ship, which has a crew of 90, had been towed to safe waters. A full military inquiry would be carried out and action taken if negligence was discovered, he said.

The Westralia was part of Australia's naval contingent sent to the Gulf war and helped in the dramatic southern Ocean rescue of British yachtsmen Tony Bullimore and Frenchman Thierry Dubois.

The worst naval accident in Australia's history happened in February 1964 when the aircraft carrier Melbourne sliced through the destroyer Voyager, killing 82 men.

In 1987 two sailors died when their submarine Otama submerged beneath the ship off Sydney. Three sailors on the destroyer Stalwart died in 1985 from inhaling poison gases generated in the ship's sewage tank.

French right-wing candidate sentenced for 'favouritism'

TOULON, France (AFP) — Cendrine Le Chevallier, the far-right National Front candidate who narrowly lost a weekend parliamentary by-election, was Tuesday given a one-month suspended jail sentence for favouritism in hiring.

Ms. Le Chevallier, a city councillor and wife of the National Front mayor of Toulon, was also fined 30,000 francs (\$5,000) for encouraging the hiring of "either National Front sympathisers or totally neutral elements."

She made the appeal in a Dec. 4 letter to the head of the city's youth leisure activities association.

When the affair emerged before the by-election, Ms. Le Chevallier alleged it amounted to "a political machination" and that she had merely sought to put people she trusted into positions in an organisation where she suspected mismanagement.

Thai man bids for world record for living with snakes

BANGKOK (AFP) — A Thai man Tuesday shut himself in a room with more than 100 snakes and vowed not to emerge for a week in an effort to set a record for living in confinement with the venomous reptiles.

Boonreung Buachan, a 27-year-old resident of northeastern Si Sa Ket province, entered a specially built glass room at a central Bangkok mall watched by a crowd of bemused onlookers.

Wearing goggles to protect his eyes, he said he had been working with snakes since he was two and did not fear the ordeal. In addition to the snakes, among them several king cobras, the room where he will spend the next seven days and nights also contains 20 scorpions and 30 poisonous centipedes.

Neither Mr. Gates' art adviser, nor his public relations company or Mr. Broome would confirm the purchase, the daily said.



While an armed U.S. Marshall stands guard at right, another U.S. Marshall takes convicted Unabomber Ted Kaczynski to a van as Kaczynski leaves the U.S. Courthouse in the Fred E. Moss Federal Building after sentencing May 4. Kaczynski, who was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole, in a brief statement read before a court packed with survivors of his bomb attacks, the families of those killed, and the brother who turned him in, said the case against him was "clearly political" and fraught with lies (Reuters photo)

Bill Gates pays record price for American painting

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Microsoft chairman Bill Gates has paid more than \$30 million for an oil painting by Winslow Homer, the highest price for an American painting.

The New York Times reported Tuesday. The price is nearly three times the previous record paid for John Singer

Sargent's "Cashmere," which sold at Sotheby's for \$11.1 million, art experts familiar with Mr. Gates' transaction told the daily.

"Lost on the Grand Banks," described by the experts as the last major seascape by Homer, was bought by Mr. Gates at a recent private sale that was

shrouded in secrecy. The painting was sold by John Spoor Broome, a businessman from southern California who bought it from his grandmother in the 1940s.

Neither Mr. Gates' art adviser, nor his public relations company or Mr. Broome would confirm the purchase, the daily said.

Niger students release their ambassador in Benin

COTONOU (AFP) — Students from Niger studying in Benin released their ambassador, Mahaman Bachir Zada, overnight after holding him at his office for several hours, a students' group told AFP Tuesday.

Monday, about 150 stu-

dents from Niger at the National University of Benin, pressing demands for unpaid scholarships and fees, forced the ambassador to stay in his office.

They released him "given firm promises" made by the authorities in Niger, the General

Union of Niger Students in Cotonou (UGENIC) said.

The protesters are demanding payment of six months' worth of grants in arrears, as well as registration fees due to the Benin government totalling 248 million CFA francs (\$413,000).

ten dead, ten missing in floods Tanzania

ES SALAM (AFP) — Ten people have died and ten more are feared dead in a flood in the coastal town of Es Salaam, Tanzania, Tuesday.

The flood was caused by heavy rain and caused the collapse of a bridge over the Rufiji River.

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Busy U. second

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Yugoslav War Tribunal opened its courtroom Tuesday to hear the second case of a war crimes trial.

The trial is the second of a series of trials to be held at the tribunal, which is based in The Hague.

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Serbian policemen take cover after unidentified gunmen opened fire during a police investigation on a murder case near the village of Glogovac Tuesday. Fighting raged for a second day in Kosovo on Monday as a senior official from neighbouring Albania warned that full-scale war could erupt in the restive Serbian province (Reuters photo)

Serb, Albanian killed in Kosovo

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — An ethnic Albanian was killed in Kosovo Tuesday and the body of a dead Serbian was discovered by police, the Serbian media centre in the provincial capital Pristina reported.

Nazif Bashot, an Albanian, was killed early Tuesday in an armed attack by unknown gunmen on his family house in the village Bobovac, near Klinja, some 80 kilometres from Pristina, the centre said, quoting police sources.

Also Tuesday morning, police discovered

the body of Nenad Jaredic, a postal worker, who was shot dead, the centre said.

Jaredic, from the village of Josanica near Klinja, was last seen leaving his village Monday for nearby Dobra Voda where he worked.

More than 100 people, most of them ethnic Albanians, have been killed since March when clashes erupted between Serbian security forces and armed Albanian separatists in Kosovo.

Japanese defence chief calls for closer military ties with China

BEIJING (AFP) — The head of Japan's Defence Agency, Fumio Kyuma, Tuesday called for more military exchanges with China and played down the possibility of Japanese forces getting involved in any conflict over Taiwan.

Japan is prepared to expand defence exchanges with China, the official Xinhua news agency quoted him as saying in an address to the Chinese army's University of National Defence.

Mr. Kyuma, the agency's director general, said he hoped to see mutual visits by warships from the two sides within the year.

He was due to wind up his four-day tour of China later in the day.

He also gave assurances that last week's moves to tighten Japan's defence cooperation with the United States were no threat to China.

Washington and Tokyo on April 28 signed an agreement under which Japan could supply U.S. troops with non-lethal provisions in "areas surrounding Japan" in situations where Japan's peace and prosperity are affected.

At the same time the Tokyo government approved three bills that would legalise such support.

The possibility that the moves would apply to conflict in the Taiwan Strait has drawn fire from Beijing. But in response to a question, Mr. Kyuma reportedly said the guidelines were not based on a geographical concept and neither included nor

excluded a given area.

Japan fully recognises Beijing's sovereignty over Taiwan, he added.

Defence Minister Chi Haotian gave Mr. Kyuma a stern lecture on the topic during their Sunday meeting.

The Taiwan issue is China's domestic affair, he said, warning that attempts to include the Taiwan Strait in the sphere of the guidelines would violate China's sovereignty and would be "totally unacceptable to the Chinese government, people and armed forces."

While Japan routinely insists the guidelines are not aimed at any third country, a cabinet official caused a furor last year by admitting that conflict in the Taiwan Strait was a contingency that could, in theory, bring the guidelines into play.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Kyuma met Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan for a "frank and sincere" exchange of views on relations and other international issues. Xinhua said, without providing other details.

Premier Zhu Rongji told him Monday that the expected visit to Japan by Chinese President Jiang Zemin this autumn would open a "new phase" in relations. The peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region depends on strengthening ties, Mr. Zhu said.

Mr. Kyuma's visit is the first to China by a Tokyo defence chief in 11 years. He arrived in Shanghai Friday and made a one-day stop in the central city of Xian before travelling to the capital.

Seven dead, seven missing after floods in Tanzania

DAR ES SALAAM (AFP)

Seven people have drowned and seven others are missing, feared dead, following a weekend of torrential rains in the Tanzanian capital, police said Tuesday.

Dar es Salaam regional Police Commander Alfred Geve told AFP that the seven missing people were believed to have drowned in flood water. Five other people died in the floods last week.

Mr. Geve said more than 700 families had been made homeless after their houses were either destroyed by floods or submerged.

The homeless are mainly slum dwellers who put up shelters in low-lying areas of the city. People in the worst-affected areas have been pulling down their corrugated iron shacks and relocating to drier areas.

Several industries and warehouses have also been affected by the floods and a number of schools remained closed Monday and Tuesday after classrooms were flooded.

The heavy seasonal rains have also destroyed roads and seven bridges in the city, cutting off some city suburbs.

Road links between Dar es Salaam and the tourist resort town of Bagamoyo, some 100 kilometres north of here, have also been cut off after a bridge collapsed.

Busy U.N. court opens second trial chamber

THE HAGUE (AP) — The Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal opened its second courtroom Tuesday as it strives to cut the growing backlog of pending trials.

"This courtroom will enable the tribunal to operate two lots of double shifts to meet the increasing demands," British Attorney General John Morris said at a low-key ceremony where he cut a U.N. blue ribbon to officially open the courtroom.

Prime Minister Tony Blair's government donated \$500,000 to fund the building work. A third courtroom, funded by the U.S. and Dutch governments, is expected to open early next month.

Tribunal President Gabrielle Kirk McDonald of the United States said she was confident the United Nations would also approve a request for three more judges to help the 11-judge court.

The U.N. court currently has 26 suspects in custody and four trials going on simultaneously.

Suspects who have turned themselves in or been arrested by NATO forces face long waits before they are tried.

There may also be more work coming. Deputy Prosecutor Graham Blewitt said the tribunal has "determined to commence investigations into the recent events in Kosovo," where more than 150 people were killed in a Serb crackdown several months ago.

Ethnic Albanians make up 90 per cent of the population in Kosovo, where fighting has escalated in recent months. Many ethnic Albanians want independence from Serbia, the largest of two republics remaining in Yugoslavia.

Mr. Blewitt said investigators will "continue to monitor what is happening" in the troubled Yugoslav province, but refused to give any further details of the investigation.

Set up in 1993 to prosecute atrocities committed during the violent breakup of the former Yugoslavia, the court has so far convicted just two war criminals out of 74 suspects publicly indicted.

Its most-wanted suspects, former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his wartime military chief General Ratko Mladic, are still at large.

Asked if he knew when they would appear in the Hague, Mr. Blewitt said: "I am confident that sooner or later all of the indicted accused will appear before this tribunal either because they are arrested or they surrender voluntarily."

Cambodian troops said to be winning against Khmer Rouge remnants

BANGKOK (AFP) — Phnom Penh's troops have the upper hand against the remnants of Khmer Rouge forces fighting a desperate battle for survival in northern Cambodia, Thai military sources said Tuesday.

Thai officers at the border just a few hundred meters from a guerrilla outpost said fighting was heavy for control of strategic Hill 200.

"The fighting is very close to the border but the Khmer Rouge still control the area," a Thai officer told AFP from a border command post.

But the Phnom Penh troops seem to be taking the advantage because they're slowly pushing the battlefield back.

Military monitors said they could hear frequent firefights involving small arms and machine guns, interspersed with artillery

and tank barrages mostly from the government side. Earlier reports said the hill had fallen and the guerrillas had retreated to positions even closer to the border.

A United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees official in Bangkok said up to 17,000 dependants of Khmer Rouge rebels had crossed into Thailand to flee the fighting.

Reports in the Thai press had said that up to 52,000 people were in two makeshift camps, about eight kilometres from the border in Thailand's Si Sa Ket province.

"The local authorities expect a total of 15,000 to 17,000 only. The reports of 25,000 to 30,000 were too high," the official said. "I think the figure (52,000), as far as we know, is ridiculous."

Thai military officers denied that some of the refugees who crossed into Thailand last week were active Khmer Rouge soldiers who had returned to Cambodia to continue fighting.

Khmer Rouge rebels led by one-legged military leader Ta Mok fled to the hill after their former stronghold at Anlong Veng, 16 kilometres south of the border with Thailand, was overrun by government soldiers in March.

The whereabouts of Ta Mok and other Khmer Rouge leaders are unknown and Thai military sources said they had no comment on rumours that there had been a split at the top of the once-feared rebel army, which presided over Cambodia's 1975-1979 "killing fields" genocide.

Some reports have said Ta Mok had fled to the Thailand-Cambodia-Lao border to the northeast, while political leader Khieu Samphan and senior ideologue Nuon Chea were trying to link with Cambodian resistance forces loyal to deposed First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Khmer Rouge radio monitored here said more than 20 government troops had been killed by mines and rocket-grenade fire Monday, with scores more injured. The radio said Phnom Penh seemed "intent on further feeding the fires of war by launching operations to destroy completely the resistance forces."

"They have also combined their forces from Siem Reap, Kompong Thom and Battambang to send them to certain death

at the frontlines," the radio added, saying the battle was still for control of Anlong Veng.

It said the Khmer Rouge could "cooperate with other national forces" to end the war and bring national reconciliation. Cambodian resistance army commander Nhek Bun Chhay has said he is waiting for Prince Ranariddh's approval before he will accept Khmer Rouge defectors into his army based at the village of O Smach, along the border to the west of Anlong Veng.

Thousands of Khmer Rouge have in recent weeks defected to the Phnom Penh army controlled by Prince Ranariddh's rival, Second Prime Minister Hun Sen, and have led the attack on their former Khmer Rouge comrades.

Key minister defends French role at probe on Rwanda genocide

PARIS (AFP) — Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine stepped in Tuesday to defend the role of late President Francois Mitterrand in events before and after the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

Mr. Vedrine, who was Mitterrand's chief of staff between 1991 and 1995, was testifying before a parliamentary commission probing policy in Rwanda, the first such inquiry set up in more than three decades to examine the country's foreign policy conduct.

The foreign minister, the first acting cabinet minister to be heard by the commission, denied that France for years had backed the Hutu extremists responsible for four months of bloody ethnic killings in 1994 in which up to 800,000 people died, mostly minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

The thrust of Mitterrand's Africa policy throughout his 14 years at the helm was to help African nations linked to France ensure security and protect their borders — through defence arrangements with Paris — while bolstering economic development and shoring up democracy, he said.

When Tutsi rebels staged a military offensive in the 1990s to bring down the regime of the late Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana, France offered military cooperation "to ensure stability and stop a chain reaction that would destabilise the region," he said.

Likewise, France throughout the Mitterrand years "did not back Habyarimana but instead relentlessly pressured him to share power" with the Tutsi minority and install truly democratic institutions, Mr. Vedrine stressed.

The commission, which is to hear some 60 people during its three to four months of hearings, was set up in March to investigate whether France supplied weaponry or political backing for Hutu extremists in Rwanda held responsible for the 1994 genocide.

At the centre of concern are allegations that France backed and armed the Hutu regime regardless of rights abuses up to 1994 and supplied training and weaponry even after the beginning of the genocide in April 1994, to the murderous Hutu army and militia.

New Caledonians hail start of new era of peace

NOUMEA (AFP) — Independence fighters and pro-France loyalists Tuesday signed an accord with French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin on the future of New Caledonia, launching a new era of peace for the French Pacific territory.

Mr. Jospin, who flew to the far-flung territory on a special 36-hour mission to sign the agreement, renewed "the government's commitment to ensure that the accord is applied totally and loyally both to the letter and its spirit."

The agreement struck on April 21 after two months of tough talks in both Paris and Noumea sets out a step-by-step devolution of powers to the New Caledonian authorities.

By the end of the year, the 200,000 residents will vote on whether the island should have its own government with enlarged powers. A referendum on full independence from France, which annexed the territory in 1953, will be held in 15 to 20 years time.

The accord includes references to the suffering of the indigenous Kanak people under French rule.

Mr. Jospin pledged at Tuesday's ceremony that draft changes to the French constitution which will be

needed to implement the accord would go before the cabinet at the end of May or beginning of June. He hoped it would be voted on by mid-July.

It is hoped the accord will end decades of tension between indigenous Melanesian Kanak people and the French and other settlers who, though in the minority, held economic and political sway.

Although Mr. Jospin steered clear of using the word "independence," with both sides still fiercely opposed over the issue, he said "the irreversibility of sharing sovereignty is an integral part of the accord."

But the head of the separatist Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS), Roch Wamytan, said: "We have begun to build independence from today."

He hailed the accord as a solution well adapted to New Caledonia's particular situation, which would allow the country "to evolve politically."

His rival Jacques Lafleur, the leader of the loyalist Rally for Caledonia in the Republic (RPCR), acknowledged that "each side had made often painful concessions" to reach the accord but said it "did not represent

any renunciation of their deep convictions."

The agreement was "a sincere expression of a desire to live and build together" a New Caledonia in which "the Melanesians can occupy their rightful place."

His party is hoping that the eventual referendum will lead to the nickel-rich island staying within the French republic.

The talks to settle the future of the islands about 1,500 kilometres east of Australia stemmed from a 1988 agreement, known as the Matignon accord, that ended years of simmering unrest and violence.

Since 1975, when Kanak separatists launched a campaign for independence, France has faced more trouble in New Caledonia than in any of its other 10 possessions.

Former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard, who signed the Matignon accord 10 years ago, was one of the first to applaud Tuesday's ceremony.

"It is the first time in history that the gradual conquest of sovereignty has been organised," he said, adding Noumea would "become a symbol of peace."

Mr. Jospin said there was much interest in the new

accord, adding that he had received congratulations from British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

But he acknowledged that there were still many issues to be settled.

"Young people are wondering and asking us with a growing insistence what will change in their daily lives, what future we are preparing for them."

"The success of the Noumea accord will be judged on the quality and strength of the replies which are given to these questions."

Earlier, Mr. Jospin paid a personal tribute to a slain New Caledonian separatist leader, Jean-Marie Tjibaou, killed by a radical separatist for signing the Matignon accord 10 years ago.

Mr. Jospin went to his grave in his tribal village of Tiendanite in a remote valley around 300 kilometres northeast of Noumea.

"By signing these accords 10 years after the Matignon accord we are prolonging Tjibaou's message of peace," he said.

The so-called Noumea accord was signed by Mr. Jospin and Secretary of State for Overseas Territories Jean-Jack Queyranne as well as Mr. Wamytan and Mr. Lafleur.

Nigerian junta to meet after death sentences

LAGOS (AFP) — The Nigerian junta's Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) will meet Tuesday, press reports said, a week after a special military court sentenced to death six people convicted of a coup plot.

The pro-government Daily Times said the PRC was due to ratify the sentences handed down on April 28 by the tribunal, which ruled after a secret hearing that six people should be executed and 10 others jailed.

Officials would not confirm that the top-level meeting of General Sani Abacha's junta was scheduled, but the PRC has the final say on upholding or annulling the court judgements, which are otherwise without appeal.

The court at Jos in central Nigeria condemned five soldiers to death, including Gen. Abacha's former number two General Oladipo Diya, with one civilian, and handed down four life prison terms and six other jail sentences, while acquitting other suspects.

The death sentences on people convicted of treason for plotting a coup which the junta said it had foiled in December have brought calls for clemency from

several foreign governments and within Nigeria itself.

The PRC is an exclusively military body whose decisions are carried out without appeal.

Some observers have noted that calls for mercy have been more muted than the international outcry which led to the commuting of death sentences against other convicted plotters, including former head of state General Olesegun Obasanjo, held to have planned a coup in 1995.

Gen. Obasanjo was the only military ruler ever to hand over power willingly to civilians in Nigeria.

Gen. Abacha has stated that he will do so on Oct. 1, but his transition programme involves five parties all authorised and funded by the regime and has been dismissed by the opposition as merely a series of manoeuvres to perpetuate the rule of his clique.

On April 30, Gen. Abacha convened a meeting of the military administrators of Nigeria's 36 states, a consultative move which he has generally taken in the past before forging ahead with crucial policy decisions by the junta.

Differences narrow over cost-sharing for N. Korea nuclear reactors

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea's economic crisis has helped narrow differences with the United States and Japan over sharing the cost of new nuclear reactors for North Korea, officials said Tuesday.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has reportedly said Washington would consider contributing to the cost of building the light water reactors if South Korea shared the U.S. burden of providing the North with crude oil.

She made the proposal last Friday in talks with South Korean counterpart Park Jung-Soo, a foreign ministry official was quoted by Yonhap News Agency as saying.

"We have agreed to pay 70 per cent (of the reactors) only if the United States arranges for the remaining 30 per cent," the foreign ministry official was quoted as saying.

The cost of building the two new reactors, to replace old ones suspected of producing plutonium for nuclear weapons, was calculated in won before the Korean currency's decline.

The official said the cost would come down from the equivalent of \$5.2 billion to between \$4.0 and \$4.2 billion should the exchange rate be adjusted from the initially agreed 925 won per dollar to between 1,100 won and 1,200 won.

Japan has proposed that if the new exchange rate is applied, it will increase its contribution from 100 billion yen, or \$800 million at the 1997 rate, to \$1

billion, Mrs. Albright told Mr. Park.

This would increase Japan's share to more than 20 per cent of the total construction cost while the United States would chip in less than 10 per cent. South Korea has agreed to offer 70 per cent, the ministry official said.

The light water reactors are at the centre of a 1994 agreement, in which North Korea agreed with the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency to suspend its nuclear programme. There were suspicions that plutonium produced by this programme was being diverted to make nuclear weapons.

In return KEDO, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation, is pledged to supply 500,000 tonnes of heavy fuel oil annually to North Korea as well as finance the building of the two 1,000-megawatt light water reactors, which produce less plutonium.

KEDO is led by South Korea, the United States and Japan. A U.S. official has said Washington is worried that North Korea might pull out of the agreement and reactivate its nuclear programme in the absence of a definite accord on cost-sharing and because of delays in providing crude oil as replacement fuel.

The United States was looking for new sources of finance, having already approached the European Union.

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 جوردن تايمز: صحيفة عربية مستقلة المنشورة بالانجليزية من قبل المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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Hope for U.S. talks

FEW COUNTRIES in the world care more deeply about the fate of next week's talks in Washington between Israel and the Palestinians. We hope that the new round will succeed where the London talks could not achieve a breakthrough.

So much is at stake on the political, economic and social levels, that, as His Majesty King Hussein pointed out on so many occasions, Jordan would be the first to suffer from the continued impasse in the peace process.

While the stalemate on the Palestinian-Israeli track becomes more and more acute, Jordanians are approaching a delicate phase of the economic restructuring programme, with the privatisation process set to gain momentum in a few months and creating fears of massive lay offs.

With these developments in mind, it is more important than ever that all political forces in the Kingdom unite to face the impending challenge.

Under the circumstances, an era of reconciliation between the government and opposition would ease tension and create consensus on the major issues facing the Kingdom.

To consolidate the country's achievements at the economic and political levels, issues such as the elections, the press law and a privatisation bill need to be debated and refined in a manner that would address the concerns of all.

The new laws that will take Jordan into the next century should be the product of a national consensus, as was the National Charter which paved the way for the democratisation process.

"Let us leave the past behind, and look to the present and the future," the King said this week, in a clear message addressed to both the government and the opposition.

"Let us identify the pitfalls and find out what people are blaming us for. Let us find out what the points of weakness are and how we can remedy them."

Political activists see in these words and in the King's acceptance of an invitation to meet with the presidents of the professional unions a signal of fresh determination to bring the government and opposition back to a constructive and fruitful dialogue.

In the national interest, both the government and the opposition must heed the King's call and sit together and listen to each other, after many months of estrangement.

The time has come for the opposition to be more pragmatic and to abandon slogans for the sake of real and obtainable goals. A mature opposition does not oppose government policies tout court.

The government, meanwhile, should treat the opposition as a partner and deal with it in good faith and complete openness.

For Jordan to continue to be an oasis of security and stability, all forces that have contributed to its well being and progress must continue to work with a unity of purpose.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Rai's Fahed Fanek urged Lebanon to accept Israel's offer to withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon. The writer said that while recognising the fact that the Israelis have offered to withdraw as a result of their losses in southern Lebanon at the hands of the Lebanese resistance, it is difficult to understand Lebanon's refusal to see Israel withdrawing from occupied Lebanese territory. He said, according to U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, Israel has to withdraw from southern Lebanon, and the Beirut government is duty bound to allow the Israelis to withdraw and recover their usurped territory especially as Israel is not demanding a peace treaty with Lebanon in exchange for its withdrawal. The writer said there is no logic in linking the occupied Syrian territories with southern Lebanese territories particularly as withdrawal from southern Lebanon is governed by Resolution 425 in exchange for nothing while Resolution 242 on the withdrawal from Syrian territory is linked to exchanging land for peace.

Al Aswaq's Rashid Hassan hailed a decision by the minister of administrative development to organise a national conference to discuss the problem of unemployment saying that the meeting would tackle one of the most important issues facing the Jordanian society. Calling on the public and private organisations in Jordan to back the idea, the writer said it is incumbent on all the universities, professional unions, chambers of commerce and industry as well as other institutions to help make this conference a success through ample preparations and in-depth studies to be submitted to the participants. The writer said unemployment has been irking the whole society as it has direct impact on every Jordanian family and therefore everything possible should be done to deal with this chronic issue because addressing unemployment means helping to end poverty in Jordan.

Washington Watch

U.S. press treatment of Israel at 50

By Dr. James J. Zogby

AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS of the Arab-Israeli conflict were shaped by myth and prejudice. As described by one of Zionism's founders, Chaim Weizmann in a 1930s appeal to supporters in the United States, the parties to the conflict in Palestine were:

On the one side [the Arabs] the forces of destruction, the forces of the desert... and on the other side [the Zionists] standing firm are the forces of civilisation and building. It is the old war of the desert against civilisation.

This stark and racist equation found no better expression than it did in the 1950s film The Exodus, which defined for generations of Americans their images of Arabs and Jews. The Jews of The Exodus were survivors of an infamous tragedy. But more than that they were industrious and visionary pioneers who sought only to create a homeland where they and their children could find freedom. They were artists and musicians. They were brave and passionate soldiers.

The Arabs of The Exodus, on the other hand, were objectified as evil lacking in human virtue. They were backward and liars. And they were cowards.

Millions read the book on which the film was based. The film itself was seen by tens of millions. And the theme song from the movie became, for many years, one of America's most popular tunes.

Actually this entire Zionist effort was not only insidious, it was also quite clever. From the beginning this movement had identified itself as a Western colonial enterprise. Zionists portrayed themselves, in Hertzl's words as "a rampart of Europe against Asia... an outpost of civilisation against barbarism."

In the United States they defined their conquest in terms Americans would understand. They, the Zionists, depicted themselves as the pioneers and cowboys, and the Arabs, as the Indians.

In the end, the Zionists won not only on the battlefield in Palestine, they also won the cultural battle in the United States to define the images through which Americans would understand this conflict.

In the face of this cultural onslaught the Arabs stood defenceless. Jews had made their story into a centrepiece of popular culture. While the Arabs told the story of their tragedy to no one except themselves.

It was not that the Arabs had no story to tell, no powerful images to evoke. They simply did not enter the marketplace of ideas in the West. And when they did, they did so clumsily and artlessly.

For more than half a century we have lived through this

onslaught — this typecasting of Israelis as good and Arabs as evil — of Israelis as humans "just like Americans" and Arabs as a faceless enemy. We have struggled to define ourselves against overwhelming odds and relentless campaigns. Arabs portrayed as bloodthirsty terrorists, Arabs depicted as wealthy and unworthy possessors of petrodollars. Through it all Arab humanity was denied and our accomplishments and aspirations ignored.

But despite these campaigns against us and despite our failure to wage an effective and intelligent cultural campaign in the West, nevertheless the struggle of our people is beginning to break through the stereotypes.

In this context it is especially interesting to note the rather significant and, to some extent, surprising U.S. press treatment of Israel's 50th anniversary. Virtually every major U.S. newspaper has devoted a series of articles to this event and almost without exception the coverage has been thoughtful and balanced. For example, The Los Angeles Times, the Detroit Free Press, the Washington Post, the Washington Times, and USA Today have all run a number of pieces examining the 50 years from a variety of perspectives, with almost all of them focusing on the unfinished issues of peace and justice for the Palestinians.

Of special note has been the coverage given by the New York Times, clearly the United States' most influential newspaper. Thus far the Times has devoted seven separate full page articles to this series, all under the heading "Israel at 50."

The first in the series was entitled "Many Voices, not All in Unison in Today's Israel," featured interviews with six different Israelis. Featured prominently among the six was an Israeli Arab who described the discrimination she has endured as an Israeli "second class citizen."

Next came a fascinating examination of the outcry created in Israel over a TV series that included a segment on the Palestinian national movement. The piece called "Israel's History, Viewed Candidly, Stirs a Storm" discussed the "new historians" of Israel who are for the first time publishing accounts of "the expulsions (of 1948)... the killings of Arab civilians in border skirmishes and missed opportunities to negotiate with the Arabs."

The third in the New York Times series focused on economic matters and discussed Israel's evolution into a capitalist hi-tech oriented economy.

But it was the fourth piece that has been the most interesting. Entitled "Living with the Palestinian 'Catastrophe'" the full-page article documents the history

of the Shikaki family. (The article was reprinted in the Jordan Times on April 25 on page 7.) It begins with their expulsion from their village in 1948 (and reports on its subsequent destruction) and notes "the Shikakis" farmed this land for generations, if not centuries, cultivating wheat, apricots, oranges and cucumbers... (after) May of 1948 they fled... and were never permitted back. Their house was demolished and their land given to the Jews."

The article then goes on to sympathetically describe the different paths taken by each of the Shikaki children: Fathi, the founder of Islamic Jihad, Khalil, the Director of the Centre for Palestine Research and Studies, and Abdul Aziz, a pharmaceutical businessman.

The next article in the series presents the results of a New York Times poll on Israel entitled "For Better or Worse, Israel is Special in U.S. Eyes," while the sixth article was entitled "Jews and Arabs, Painting a Mural Together. Find a Mosaic of Distrust." This article describes the tensions that developed among three artists — an Israeli Jew, an Israeli Arab, and a West Bank Palestinian — as they worked together to create an artistic representation of their conflict.

This final piece in the series was a balanced treatment of the actual celebration on Israel's anniversary: including the demonstrations by rightists and peace activists at Jabal Abu Ghneim and a separate long article on Palestinian reactions to the day during which they mourn for their loss.

What has been exceptionally evident in the Times series and most of the other press treatments of the 50th anniversary is the extent to which Arab voices and Arab stories have figured prominently in the accounts.

Despite Zionism's fervent efforts to deny the Arab human component to the conflict in Palestine, 50 years later it continues to weigh heavily on their story. As it is, notwithstanding Zionism's military conquest and its cultural onslaught this movement has been unable to erase Arab humanity from the equation in Palestine. The Palestinian demand for justice remains a significant issue that will not go away. And Palestinian voices continue to factor prominently throughout the U.S. press stories written about "Israel at 50." In the end, the exclusionary myth could not totally conquer. Palestinians remain and must be dealt with as equals and their aspirations respected.

Israel cannot commemorate its anniversary even in the United States without being reminded of its past. And it will not know peace until the injustices of that past have been restored.

Being the only superpower means never having to say you're sorry

By A. Clare Brandabur

THE PRESENT flurry of consultations between the U.S. Secretary of State and the leaders of Israel and the Palestinians in London illustrates all too clearly the damage caused by the refusal to recognise and assign responsibility for the real issues underlying the present crisis. It is futile to pretend that the burning issue is what minuscule percentage of Palestinian land is to be evacuated by Israeli occupation troops or that Madeleine Albright is really going about trying to "bridge the gap" between the two sides.

Unless and until the U.S. is willing to admit that years of stunningly unequal treatment by a succession of Washington administrations has created this gap, it is ingenious to pretend Israeli wealth and military power just happened or that the "development" of West Bank and Gazan economies is a natural phenomenon.

Because the U.S. is the sole world superpower, there seems to be a tacit assumption that, though other merely human administrations may undergo self-criticism and require the arduous work of a truth and reconciliation commission, Washington is allowed to go about huffing and puffing in indignation at the failures of others, never confronting its own glaring mistakes. To the eternal credit of South Africa's new government, the crimes of black and white antagonists in the struggle against apartheid are being painfully reviewed, and those who are willing to admit their mistakes and to confess them to the world are given amnesty. The U.S. has been as self-righteous as a Puritan schoolmaster in calling for Khmer Rouge murderers to be brought before a world tribunal to answer for the slaughter of millions of Cambodians. But I see no evidence that the U.S. is ready to acknowledge and repent the fact that its moral, military and financial support for Pol Pot, justified by "cold war" expediencies, had the slightest bearing on these tragic events.

Thailand was turned into a brothel to serve U.S. troops during the Viet Nam war. Yet where is the confession of complicity on the part of the responsible decision-makers when Thailand suffers an AIDS epidemic or becomes the victim of child-sex tourist schemes? Jonas Savimbi could not have continued the insurrection which cost thousands of lives and wasted the wealth of Angola had Henry Kissinger not perversely if covertly continued support long after it was obvious that the country as a whole had opted for a government not to his liking. Saddam Hussein was able to massacre Kurdish and Shiite rebels because the same illustrious U.S. statesman had

manoeuvred to leave him in control of the necessary air power and to withdraw support from dissident factions who had been promised American backing in their efforts to overthrow the leader. I remember being shocked to see Henry Kissinger on TV saying that we must leave Saddam Hussein enough of his tanks and elite troops to avoid "destabilising the region." (See the recent book by Jonathan Randall on The Kurds: After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness?)

As Christopher Hitchens points out in his excellent book on Cyprus (aptly sub-titled Hostage to History: From the Mongols to Henry Kissinger), it was also Kissinger's connivance with the Turkish generals and the Greek colonels for landing rights at Pireaus on the one hand and air-bases in Turkey on the other which underlay the division of this beautiful long-suffering island.

Where is this admission in the bullying of U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke in his "shuttle diplomacy"? Where is U.S. contrition for the millions of land mines which continue to mutilate civilians in Afghanistan and Cambodia and Viet Nam? Who can charge George Bush or Ms. Albright with mass murder for the deaths of children in Iraq caused by U.S. bombing and U.S. enforced sanctions? Which of the presidents and generals and secretaries of state will stand before the World Court and answer for these crimes?

In Israel there is a sharp division between the official stance and that of the revisionist historians and the peace activists who have courageously faced up to the atrocities of Israel against the Palestinians from even before the beginning of the Jewish state. The official Netanyahu government continues to maintain the myth of the little Jewish state struggling bravely against a sea of foes. When will Ariel Sharon stand accused before a world court of war crimes for the slaughter of civilians in Lebanon? When will Israel be charged with war crimes for its torture of political prisoners and the assassinations of Palestinian leaders by death squads? When will Israel be charged in Brussels or anywhere else with ethnic cleansing and genocide?

Since the answer to these rhetorical questions is a cynical laugh, it should not surprise us that, at the very moment when Ms. Albright is trying so hard to "bridge the gap" between Israel and the Palestinians, U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen is meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to offer funding for a whole new generation of military hardware including more millions to be added to the billions already in the works for a third Arrow anti-missile battery.

Press crackdown confusion

By Steve Negus

CAIRO — The Egyptian government has a strange way of confusing itself with its own rhetoric.

Citing the need to protect officials and businessmen from slander and calumny, the state has declared its readiness to stamp the so-called "yellow press" out of existence, with the state-owned (and indeed some of the opposition) press cheering them on. But now that they are ready to make the decrees and take the international criticism, the government seems to be floundering in its attempts to define what the "yellow press" might be and is striking out at random.

On March 31, printing houses in the Nasser City Free Zone were unexpectedly told by the Investment Authority that they would no longer be allowed to print newspapers or magazines, in any language, of any type.

The free zone is a printing venue of choice for what the papers have dubbed the "Cyprus phenomenon," periodicals unable to obtain an Egyptian printing licence but legally registered in Cyprus.

But none of the approximately 60 periodicals that print in Nasser City constitute what is normally referred to as the "yellow press" — fly-by-night

rags with minimal circulation and survive on bribes and blackmail. The only ones that could possibly be considered even controversial are the English-language Cairo Times (where this correspondent is employed), Egypt Today, Middle East Times or Business Monthly, all of which are subject to the foreign publications censor any way.

The vast majority, however, are things like Satellite Guide, Dining Guide, Huwa wa Hiya (Him and Her, for teenagers), Dikor (interior decorating), or Shams (gardening). The irony of all this, however, is that most of these papers can go and print elsewhere in the region — a Lebanese printer is already in town scouting for business. The only ones who will really lose out are the Free Zone's two Egyptian-owned print shops and their 250-odd employees.

Lacking from the whole picture is any sense of why the government issued this decree at all. The order clearly came from the top. The two obvious suspects — free zone authority head Ibrahim Fawzi and Information Minister Safwat Al Sharif, who normally keeps the press in check — have both privately told publishers that they had nothing to do

with it. This leaves Prime Minister Kamal Al Ganzori or, more likely, President Hosni Mubarak himself.

It is possible (but unlikely) that the president so much wanted to shut down the English-language publications that he did not mind sacrificing all the rest alongside them. It is far more likely, however, that he did not know one from the other and simply confused (or was deliberately misled into confusing) the "Cyprus phenomenon" and the "yellow press," terms which the press has been using interchangeably, and ordered the free zone closed without looking further into the matter.

Before the Luxor massacre, one could say that Mubarak was not at all the type to make sloppy decisions. But in the four months since Luxor Egypt has witnessed his snap decision to fire the interior minister (not that anyone questions its ultimate wisdom, but it was sudden), then his February haranguing of businessmen, then his decision to shut down Al Dustur, then this. This trend, more than anything else, is reason for concern about Egypt's future.

— Middle East International

LETTERS

Germans omitted

To the editor:

WE ARE disappointed, that the "Jordan Times" report on the COPEX Fair in Amman (April 29) did not mention Germany as being among the exhibitors at the "COPEX Fair." Together there have been over five German companies at "COPEX." No other foreign country had as many exhibitors.

We rely on the traditional friendship between our two countries to express our disappointment.

Manfred Köhler
 German General Agency
 Amman

Origins and charges

To the editor:

I WOULD like to point out a few mistakes in the article with regards to Internet Relay Chat published in the Jordan Times on Thursday, April 23.

1. Khaled Mardam-Bey is not Egyptian. He is of Syrian origin.

2. The concept is called IRC, however, the actual software Khaled developed is called mIRC.

3. The writer was correct in saying that Khaled at first released the software free of charge, however, but for him to be able to continue to develop the programme, he began to charge an optional registration fee of \$20 not \$1 as stated in the article. The charge is still optional and any contribution, however large or small, is very much appreciated by Khaled.

Karim Mardam-Bey
 Amman

Features

Nizar Kabbani of freedom

By Peter Clarke

WITH THE death of Nizar Kabbani, at the age of 75, the Arab World has lost one of its most popular poets, one who expressed in simple but soaring language the aspirations, frustrations, anger and visions of millions of Arabs. In particular, Kabbani's work explored the human condition and the search for love and freedom, especially as experienced by women.

Kabbani was born in Damascus to a gifted and comfortable but not wealthy family. A poet since a young age, he was a member of the Syrian Arab League and the Syrian Arab Republic. He was deeply affected when his wife, Rana Kabbani, was a teenager by the suicide of her sister, Wisal, whose man he loved.

Kabbani wrote poetry from an early age. While still a very young man, he published his first poem, a love poem, at the age of 17. He was a member of the Syrian Arab League and the Syrian Arab Republic. He was deeply affected when his wife, Rana Kabbani, was a teenager by the suicide of her sister, Wisal, whose man he loved.

Kabbani wrote poetry from an early age. While still a very young man, he published his first poem, a love poem, at the age of 17. He was a member of the Syrian Arab League and the Syrian Arab Republic. He was deeply affected when his wife, Rana Kabbani, was a teenager by the suicide of her sister, Wisal, whose man he loved.

Kabbani left service in 1946, own publishing

His view that social national liberation means without liberation

Beirut, working as a journalist. He now works for the Arab World as a set to music and a leading singer of readings both on television and in public readings. A 1967, with the Arab new tone in his poetry, social and literary became more political very angry.

"My greatest love in a flash You changed my life to a poet who wrote in a knife."

Another celebration Marginalia to the B. Setback, was an empty rhetoric of the movement in the morning up to the June 19

"Our struggle is in our actions. Our swords are in our hands. This is our tragedy."

To Arafat, issue of not an insurmountable

Continued from page 1)

shaped land and an insurmountable part of the Palestinian state. The PLO has decided to be the capital of the Palestinian state." Mr. Abdul

Kabbani said the group of issues related to the peace process included relations between Jordan and Israel and the Palestinian state and the peace process and the direction it was

also talked about our own future. The outcome of the meeting, he said, was to be a separate meeting with Arafat and Israeli

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held on Tuesday (see story).

During the meeting, Siegmund, Dr. Magid, the stalled peace between Israel and the Palestinians should get the "empty debate."

"There is a need to one in joint forces on a push the peace process forward and save it from empty debate which the government is providing exploiting," Dr. Magid quoted as telling the U.S. gation.

"The peace process is an international strategy no room for backing because otherwise the and its people will be to consequences which benefit no one," he said. The meetings, which

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Features

Nizar Kabbani's songs of freedom

By Peter Clarke

WITH THE death of Nizar Kabbani, at the age of 75, the Arab World has lost one of its most popular poets, one who expressed in simple but searing language the aspirations, frustrations, anger and visions of millions of Arabs. In particular, Kabbani's work explored the themes of love and freedom, especially as experienced by women.

Kabbani was born in Damascus to a gifted and comfortable, but not wealthy, family. A great uncle, Abu Khalil Kabbani, was a pioneer of the theatre in late 19th-century Damascus. His niece is the London-based writer, Rana Kabbani. He was deeply affected when he was a teenager by the suicide of his sister, Wisal, because she was unable to marry the man she loved.

Kabbani wrote poetry from an early age. While still a very young man, he published his first volume of love poetry at his own expense, or rather at the expense of his illiterate mother, who, recognising her son's talent, sold some of her jewellery to provide the cash. The publication caused a minor scandal among the conservative bourgeoisie of Damascus.

After studying law at the Syrian University, he joined the diplomatic service of the newly-independent Syrian state, and served in embassies in Cairo, London, Beijing and Madrid. During this professional period, he produced a volume of poetry almost every year. He was skilful in both a classical form as well as in modernist free verse. But he also developed a style of his own. He extended poetic language to include the language of everyday speech, and his words had a direct appeal to literate and unlettered alike.

Most of his poetic themes were about love and embodied an assault on social and sexual taboos. His view was that social and national liberation was meaningless without sexual liberation. He wrote usually in the first person, often using the voices of women, exploring themes of betrayed love, frustrated love, even of lesbian love. His message was that women should be free to live, work and love as they choose. A Kabbani poem might be like a squire, a firecracker of feeling:

*"You still ask me the date of my birth.
Write this down,
And now you know: my birthday
Occurred when you began to love me."*

One of his most celebrated poems of social protest was *Bread, Hashish and a Moon*, written in 1954. In this, he described the conditions of poverty of the Arab masses. The publication of the poem led to a debate in the Syrian parliament with some members wanting to put Kabbani on trial, and others wanting him expelled from government service.

Of his overseas postings, it was his longest, in Madrid, that had most impact on his poetry. The Umayyads had ruled an



Islamic empire from Damascus in the first centuries of Islam and it was an Umayyad who had fled to Andalusia to rule in Cordoba. Kabbani was passionately mindful of the link:

*"Walking through Cordoba's
narrow alleys
I kept searching my pockets,
hoping to find
The key to our house in
Damascus."*

Kabbani left the diplomatic service in 1966 and set up his own publishing house in

His view was that social and national liberation was meaningless without sexual liberation.

Beirut, working also as editor and journalist. His poems by now were popular throughout the Arab World and had been set to music and sung by all the leading singers of the time. His readings both on radio and on television reached millions. A public reading in Sudan had an audience of 10,000. But from 1967, with the Arab defeat at the hands of Israel, there was a new tone in his poetry, which, from being revolutionary in social and literary terms, became more political and very angry.

*"My grieved country,
in a flash
You changed me from a
poet who wrote love poems
To a poet who writes with a
knife."*

Another celebrated poem, *Marginalia to the Book of the Setback*, was an attack on the empty rhetoric of Arab governments in the months leading up to the June 1967 war:

*"Our shouting is louder than
our actions,
Our swords are taller than
us.
This is our tragedy."*

Kabbani stayed in Beirut well into the civil war. His first marriage to a Syrian had ended in divorce. His second wife, Bilqis, an Iraqi teacher, was killed by a car-bomb in 1981, a death which — like that of his mother — inspired poetry expressing a manner appreciation of women as individuals rather than as symbols for social emancipation. His autobiography, *My Story* was published in 1972.

After his wife's death, he moved to Switzerland, France and settled in London. He received many literary awards and reckoned that over 10 million volumes of his verse had been sold. Much of his later poetry savaged the tyranny, corruption and abuse of power of Arab governments and in most Arab countries his poetry has, at one time, been banned.

Yet those governments, nervously aware of his mass appeal, "courted" him. He attended poetry festivals in Baghdad under the patronage of Saddam Hussein. In the early 1990s, he visited Damascus and, in spite of his apparent criticism of the regime, a public lecture and reading he gave was attended by a son of the president. Two volumes of translations of his poetry into English have been published.

Such has been the allure of Arabic words that Kabbani's poetry will long outlast the men of power against whom he railed:

*"If an audience could be
arranged
And also my safe return
This is what I'd tell the Sultan."*

*"If I were given safety
From the Sultan's armed
guards
I would say, O Sultan,
The reason you've lost wars
twice
Was because you've been
walled in from
Mankind's cause and voice."*

He is survived by two daughters and a son.

Nizar Kabbani, poet, born March 21, 1923; died April 30, 1998.

— The Guardian

Baghdad diary — Bidding for a mirror of silver with pockets full of paper

By Patrick Cockburn

I SPENT a frustrating evening trying to buy a silver mirror and a carpet at the Al Rashid auction house on the east bank of the Tigris. The prices in both cases were cheap but I found it impossible to go on bidding because they were in Iraqi dinars, now valued at 1,480 to the U.S. dollar. I was confident enough when the auctioneer started the bidding for the mirror at 50,000 dinars. This was cheap. The mirror was pretty and made 50 years ago in the holy city of Kerbala.

Others, mostly Iraqi antique dealers, liked the mirror too. The bidding was hot. When the auctioneer called out 182,000 dinars I dropped out — 182,000 of anything seemed like too much money. The price was still only \$120, far less than the mirror was worth anywhere outside Baghdad, but I found it impossible to keep putting my hand up because the nominal figure was so high. In private dealings, Iraqis avoid this problem by using American hundred dollar bills, but not any bill will do. The preferred bill is that issued in 1996 and after with a large picture of Benjamin Franklin on the front. An Iraqi friend said: "A hundred dollars is worth so much to us these days that we can't afford to be taken in by a forgery."

For most purposes Iraqi dinars

are necessary. They usually come in bundles of 250 dinar notes and the currency weighs a lot when you change a hundred dollar bill. Coins are no longer minted because hyper-inflation has made them virtually worthless. When I first went to Iraq in 1977, a dinar was worth around 53.

I stayed at the Al Rashid Hotel, the usual haunt of journalists in Baghdad. It still has its mosaic of George Bush with jagged teeth on the floor which you have to step on to get into the lobby. Underneath is the logo: "Bush is Criminal."

The Americans considered bombing the al-Rashid in 1991, ostensibly because they claimed there was an Iraqi command post underneath it. The real reason was that they would have liked to put the satellite dishes used by American television correspondents out of action. In one of the great journalistic bug-outs of all time almost all the American print journalists left Iraq voluntarily before the bombing started.

The ground-floor bar of the hotel was, in fact, accidentally hit by part of a Tomahawk missile brought down by Iraqi anti-aircraft fire. The bar was wrecked. Nobody was injured because Saddam Hussein had summoned an Islamic meeting in solidarity with Iraq in a nearby conference hall. Many of the delegates were staying in the Al Rashid.

In deference to their Islamic susceptibilities, the bar had suddenly taken alcoholic drinks off its shelves. Seldom can temperance have saved lives so quickly. When the Tomahawk hit, the bar was completely deserted.

Alcohol has since been banned in hotels and restaurants. But it is available in specially licensed shops. I bought some Bavarian beer and a bottle of Chianti. Something nasty had clearly happened to the latter between Tuscany and Baghdad and it tasted like neat vinegar.

Aside from the George Bush mosaic there is little in Baghdad, a city of monuments, to commemorate the Gulf war. An exception is the bronze statue of Saddam Hussein beside the Saddam Hussein tower in the centre. It is about 15ft tall and at first sight no different from numerous other statues of the Iraqi leader. On closer view, however, you can see the plinth on which the statue stands is covered with engine parts belonging to an American ground-to-ground missile. And on closer view still, the flattened little bronze pancakes beside the boots of the statue turn out to be the faces of George Bush, Margaret Thatcher, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, Emir Jaber of Kuwait and, slightly smaller in size, President Mitterrand of France.

In Baghdad, people say the only Iraqis doing well out of sanctions

are black marketeers and the farmers. The success of the former is obvious enough. We drove west from Baghdad to Diyala province to see how the farmers were doing. Unlike most Iraqis they can feed themselves and take advantage of the high price of foodstuffs. Beside the Diyala River, we sat in the garden of a successful farmer who agreed he had made money from selling oranges, though he complained the price of grapes had collapsed.

Then he produced X-ray plates. They were of the chest of his 24-year-old cousin Ahmed, who has a weak heart, taken in London 13 years ago. He had not been able to go back for a second operation because of the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf war and then sanctions. We went to another, poorer farm and the same thing happened. The farmer produced an elderly X-ray of the skull of his five-year-old daughter Fatima. She could not stand upright.

There was something infinitely touching about these old X-rays. They seemed to symbolise the desperation of ordinary Iraqis over sanctions. The farmers should be better off than the townspeople, but almost all of them have at least one relative ill or dying because he or she cannot get proper medical help.

— The Independent

U.S. official tallies up pluses of joining WTO

The following is an address delivered by Gary Grappo, economic counsellor of the United States Embassy in Amman to the Jordanian Fruit and Vegetables Producers and Exporters Association on April 30, 1998.

I WOULD like to speak about the World Trade Organisation (WTO), how it operates, and the benefits it will bring once Jordan becomes a member.

The foundations for the WTO were established in the wake of World War II. The general agreement on tariffs and trade, or GATT, was signed in 1947, after the World Bank and the IMF were founded at the Bretton Woods Conference. The GATT's purpose was to normalise or standardise the international trade regime, and lower barriers to trade. By creating a more open international trade regime, benefits would accrue to both producers and consumers.

The WTO was founded in January 1995 as a result of the 1994 Uruguay round agreement. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and has approximately 500 employees. It administers various agreements that lay out the ground rules for trade not only in goods, like the GATT, but also in services and intellectual property.

One hundred and thirty-two countries are members of the WTO, and thirty-one are in the process of joining. That covers almost every country in the world and more than 90 per cent of world trade. Countries in this region that are already members include Egypt, Israel, Cyprus, Morocco, Tunisia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Some of the countries waiting to accede, besides Jordan, are Algeria, Oman, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, and Ukraine.

Why are these countries lining up to join this

organisation? Because the WTO offers a transparent set of rules for trade that apply to most of the world's nations. It also offers a forum to negotiate the gradual opening of national markets, and, when necessary, a mechanism to resolve trade disputes in areas covered by the WTO agreements.

Free trade is better

The basic principle that is the foundation of the WTO's agreements, and which underlies the multilateral trading system, is that trade among nations is good, and the more trade is free, the better.

Why should trade be free? Well, I'm speaking to an exporters association, so I don't need to go into great detail. Suffice it to say that a recent report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development said that countries that have been more open to trade in the last decade have achieved double the annual growth of others.

Non-discrimination (most favoured nation and national treatment) Another WTO principle is non-discrimination, also known as "most favoured nation" treatment and "national"

ability or negotiating power to obtain these benefits on their own.

National treatment means that once goods enter a market, they are treated no less favourably than the equivalent domestically-produced goods. This ensures that products from exporting countries, once they pay any import tariffs, can compete fairly in at least 132 markets throughout the world.

Pre-dictability

Another principle is that WTO nations' economic policies, which include tariff levels, should be predictable. Members of the WTO fix or "bind" their tariffs, and cannot raise them without negotiating with other member nations. This allows business a clearer view of their operating environment and allows for longer-term planning.

Dismantle trade barriers gradually through negotiation

Generally, the WTO approach is that barriers to trade should be dismantled gradually, through negotiation. However, when two nations have a conflict that cannot be resolved through negotiation, there is a procedure that allows

nations to file complaints to a dispute settlement board. Simply put, WTO trade experts examine the evidence presented by both sides of the dispute, and make a decision within one year.

Small nations can win WTO dispute cases

I'd like to point out that small nations, if they are right, can win their cases against large nations. One of the first disputes in WTO history was a complaint by Venezuela against the U.S. over

treatment. Most favoured nation treatment means that WTO nations cannot discriminate against or favour particular WTO member nations. All members of the organisation are treated equally and share the benefits of lower trade barriers. This ensures that smaller or developing nations with little economic leverage, such as Jordan, can benefit from the best trading environment, even when they might not have the

ability or negotiating power to obtain these benefits on their own.

[The most favoured nation principle] ensures that smaller or developing nations with little economic leverage, such as Jordan, can benefit from the best trading environment, even when they might not have the ability or negotiating power to obtain these benefits on their own.

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As Jordan's neighbours, particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia, become more and more competitive and adopt WTO consistent laws and policies, they are attracting money that might have been invested in Jordan to create jobs and growth.

kets to trade attracts investment and makes nations more competitive. This stimulates efficiency, which contributes to economic expansion, rising incomes and an improved standard of living.

As Jordan's neighbours, particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia, become more and more competitive and adopt WTO consistent laws and policies, they are attracting money that might have been invested in Jordan to create jobs and growth. Businessmen want clear, transparent rules of trade, and WTO membership is proof that a nation's economic and business policies are open and fair.

In becoming a WTO member, Jordan will have to undergo some reforms in the agricultural sector. To help alleviate the disruption that these reforms might cause, there are provisions that allow developing nations to undertake their reforms more gradually than developed nations.

Benefits — lower tariffs and subsidies, no quotas

However, there are many benefits to WTO membership, particularly to the agricultural sector. A gradual reduction in tariffs on agricultural imports and export subsidies, and elimination of import quotas will make Jordanian agricultural products more competitive in the region and world markets. As these market distortions are eliminated, Jordanian

farmers will be able to obtain higher prices for their export-quality produce.

In addition, if a nation blocks the import of Jordanian goods, and there is no scientific or other legitimate basis to prohibit trade, Jordan can bring the complaint to the

WTO's dispute resolution body. If your case is good, you will likely win and obtain either market access or compensation, or both.

If Jordan were a member today, I suspect you might have a few cases in progress against certain countries that are hindering the export of your agricultural goods.

The cost of delay

Just as in any club, the longer you delay in signing up, the more difficult it is to become a member. The WTO will have a round of negotiations on agriculture in 1999, but Jordan will not be able to have any input or influence on the results because it will not likely be a member by then.

It will, however, have to abide by the results of that negotiation when it finally joins, which may mean more difficult reforms and a shorter transition period to implement those reforms. Outside of agriculture, the WTO has recently reached agreements on telecommunications and financial services, and will revisit services in the year 2000. Jordan will have to abide by all of these agreements when it becomes a member.

The U.S. government, through USAID, is giving technical assistance to the Jordanian government to help its effort to join the WTO.

Our government believes that membership in the WTO will provide Jordanian producers, investors, consumers, employers and employees with a business environment that encourages trade, investment and job creation, as well as choice in the market place.

'To Arafat, issue of future capital not an insurmountable problem'

(Continued from page 1)

an occupied land and an inseparable part of the Palestinian territories. The PLO has decided it would be the capital of the Palestinian state," Mr. Abdul Rahman stressed.

Mr. Siegman said the group and Mr. Majali discussed a wide range of issues related to the Middle East.

"They included relations between Jordan and Israel and between Israel and the Palestinians in addition to the peace process and the direction it was taking," he added.

"We also talked about our concerns over the outcome of the London meeting," he added, referring to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's separate meetings with Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu held on Monday and Tuesday (see separate story).

During the meeting with Mr. Siegman, Dr. Majali said that the stalled peace process between Israel and the Palestinians should get rid of the "empty debate."

"There is a need for everyone to join forces on all levels to push the peace process forward and save it from the empty debate which the Israeli government is provoking and exploiting," Dr. Majali was quoted as telling the U.S. delegation.

"The peace process became an international strategy with no room for backing down because otherwise the region and its people will be exposed to consequences which will benefit no one," he added. The meetings, which have

not achieved a breakthrough, were aimed at reviving the peace talks and bringing the two sides back on track.

The Council on Foreign Relations is a U.S. non-governmental organisation (NGO) with a membership that includes former U.S. presidents, cabinet members and analysts.

The council sponsors U.S.-Middle East projects that focus on the peace process and attempts to move it forward both on the economic and political track.

Among their board participants on the peace process are U.S. special peace envoy Dennis Ross, the Egyptian President's political advisor, Osama Al Baz and Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Prince Bandar Ben Sulian.

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Routing imports through Haifa seen posing danger to Aqaba, Jordan economy

THE ASSOCIATION of foodstuff traders is proposing that a fine be imposed on imports through ports other than Aqaba. In a memorandum sent to the prime minister, association president Nizar Darwazah warned of the dangers from moves by some traders to buy basic and strategic foodstuffs through the Israeli port of Haifa. He said some shipments of rice, sugar, wheat, barley, coffee and corn were obtained by Jordanian wholesale traders through Israeli imports.

"Such a route inflicts big damage on the Jordanian economy," Mr. Darwazah wrote, indicating that the foodstuffs mentioned represent nearly two million tonnes of imports which provide the Aqaba port with no less than JD40 million in various income for services rendered. In addition, he said, the vessels which transport food imports to Aqaba are also used to export Jordanian phosphate, fertilisers and potash at low prices.

In his memorandum, Mr. Darwazah said a study conducted by the association showed that by importing through Haifa, traders can save up to \$13 per tonne compared to costs via Aqaba. Although land transport and handling costs between the port of Haifa and Amman is about \$5 per

UAE has long record of bank problems

DUBAI (AFP) — An alleged massive fraud in the Dubai Islamic Bank (DIB) is the latest in a series of bank crises in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The UAE had one of the most prosperous banking sectors in the world during the oil boom of the late 1970s and 1980s as it benefited from financing one of the biggest construction drives in modern history.

But after a sudden economic slump caused by a decline in oil prices from their peak of more than \$30 a barrel in 1980, many banks reported a U-turn in their business while some foreign units pondered pulling out.

The problem culminated in the mid-1980s, when oil prices deteriorated further, plunging the region into unprecedented stagnation, forcing governments to cut spending and shelving scores of major projects.

Banks then realised their deadly mistake of rushing to extend loans during the boom without ensuring enough funds to use in an emergency.

"It was a fatal mistake. Many banks suffered from large losses as hundreds of debtors failed to pay and others fled the country," one banker said.

"In the absence of enough reserves, the banking sector was severely hit by what we call the bad and doubtful debt problem," he added.

"The crisis forced the banks to allocate large parts of their profits to provisions, while other units were compelled to merge to avert bankruptcy and the ensuing liquidation," the banker noted.

The problem triggered stronger supervision by the central bank.

But as the banks started to recover by amassing sufficient reserves, the banking system was again shaken by another major crisis in 1991.

The collapse of the Abu Dhabi-controlled Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) came as UAE banks were still sacrificing part of their earnings for loan loss provisions to be able to handle another crisis.

Several banks in the oil-rich Gulf country reported losses as they had large deposits with BCCI, which was ordered liquidated in 1992.

"The BCCI crisis had a big psychological impact in the UAE as it underscored the vulnerability of the banking sector," a bank manager said.

"That explains the sweeping reforms introduced by the central bank after that crisis as more problems could badly damage its financial reputation," he added.

The reforms included

Jordan promotes tourism in Dubai

DUBAI (Petra) — Jordan is taking part in the Dubai Arab Travellers Market Exhibition (the 1998 Forum) held at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

Marwan Khoury, the head of the Jordanian delegation to this year's event, said the Jordanian pavilion at the exhibition seeks to promote Jordan through films and promotional materials about tourism and archaeological places in Jordan, in addition to information leaflets on the facilities available to tourists in Jordan.

Taking part in the Jordanian pavilion are representatives for the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Tourism Promotion Corporation (TPC), Royal Jordanian (RJ), the Tourist Agents Association, Royal Wings and tourist and travel agents.

Mr. Khoury, director general of the TPC, said Jordanian travel and tourist agents held several meetings with their Arab and foreign counterparts, on the sidelines of the exhibition.

The exhibition, one of the most important specialised exhibitions in the Middle East, will run through May 10.

Swiss authorities approve merger of two biggest banks

ZURICH (AFP) — The Swiss Competition Commission has approved a merger between Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) and Swiss Bank Corporation (SBC), the two companies announced Tuesday.

The commission's clearance, given Monday, "enables merger preparations to be brought to a speedy conclusion," the two banks said in a statement welcoming the announcement.

"The conditions imposed are stringent but tolerable," Brussels gave its assent to the marriage in early March, but the U.S. Federal Reserve Board and the New York State Banking Department have still to pronounce on the union, said the statement, which predicts the merger will be completed in June.

The two banks announced in December they would merge to create United Bank of Switzerland, which will rank as one of the world's largest financial institutions with \$615 billion in assets and some \$400 billion under management.

SBC shareholders will own 40 per cent of the new entity and those of UBS will own 60 per cent.

Swiss competition authorities requested as a condition for their approval that the new group sell banking subsidiary Banca della Svizzera Italiana by the end of March and Bank of Solothurn SoBa within five years.

UBS is also obliged to sell 25 branches throughout Switzerland by the end of March, 1999.

Another condition is that existing credit relationships with small and mid-sized Swiss companies may not be reduced as a result of the merger if clients have up to four million Swiss francs in combined loans outstanding with the two partners.

The conditions "reflected the concern of the Competition Commission and of the two banks to mitigate the impact of the merger on small and medium-sized businesses," the statement said.

UBS and SBC control more than 25 per cent of the Swiss retail banking market.

The merger has raised the hackles of quite a few Swiss angered over job losses. The duo have announced that 7,000 people will be cut from payrolls in Switzerland and 15,000 worldwide.

UBS has set aside 4.4 billion Swiss francs and SBC 2.36 billion for restructuring costs linked with the merger.

"All internal preparations for the merger will be completed by the end of May so that the merger can be formalised over a weekend in June once U.S. regulatory approvals have been obtained," the banks said.

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7892	0.6022	1.4805	131.62	1.4382	1746.50	1.9829	5.9315	
DE Mark	0.5682		0.3401	0.8374	74.37	0.8132	986.78	1.1262	3.3627
GB Sterling	1.8605	2.9383		2.4691	218.42	2.3898	2897.97	3.3068	9.8438
CH Franc	0.6784	119.31	0.4063		88.78	0.9714	1177.88	134.38	4.0003
JP Yen	0.0078	1.2437	0.4871	1.1244		1.0930	13.26	151.35	4.5041
CA Dollar	0.6848	1.2916	0.4225	1.0566	1.09		1270.80	1.4651	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0134	0.3448	0.8848	1327.67	0.8244		11.42	3.3971
NL Guilder	0.5018	88.76	0.3021	74.29	88.00	0.7220	876.51		2.9764
FR Franc	0.1688	0.2982	0.1014	24.8515	22.77	0.2426	33.59	33.5900	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar		0.7080	2.7603	0.3770	3.3408	0.3091	3.6727	1514.80	3.4170
Jordan Dinar	1.4104		5.2896	0.5317	5.1381	0.4303	5.1801	2136.11	4.8186
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	0.1891		0.1005	0.97	0.0814	0.98	403.83	0.9111
Bahrain Dinar	2.66	1.8808	9.3495		9.66	0.8093	9.74	4017.66	9.0644
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1947	1.0301		1.0038	1.01	415.98	0.9385	
Kuwait Dinar	3.2775	2.3238	12.2920	1.2356	11.93		12.04	4983.85	0.9385
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1830	1.0211	0.1026	0.9913	0.0831		412.37	0.9304
Lebanese/1000	0.68	0.4681	2.4763	0.2489	2.4040	0.2015	2.4280		2.2562
Egyptian	0.2827	0.2075	1.0975	0.1103	1.0655	0.0883	1.0748	443.23	

Energy									
Oil	Last	Review							
Brent	14.16	14.67							
W. Texas	15.41	15.94							
Bonny	14.16	14.67							
Dubai	13.08	12.90							
UL Gas	158.00	158.00							

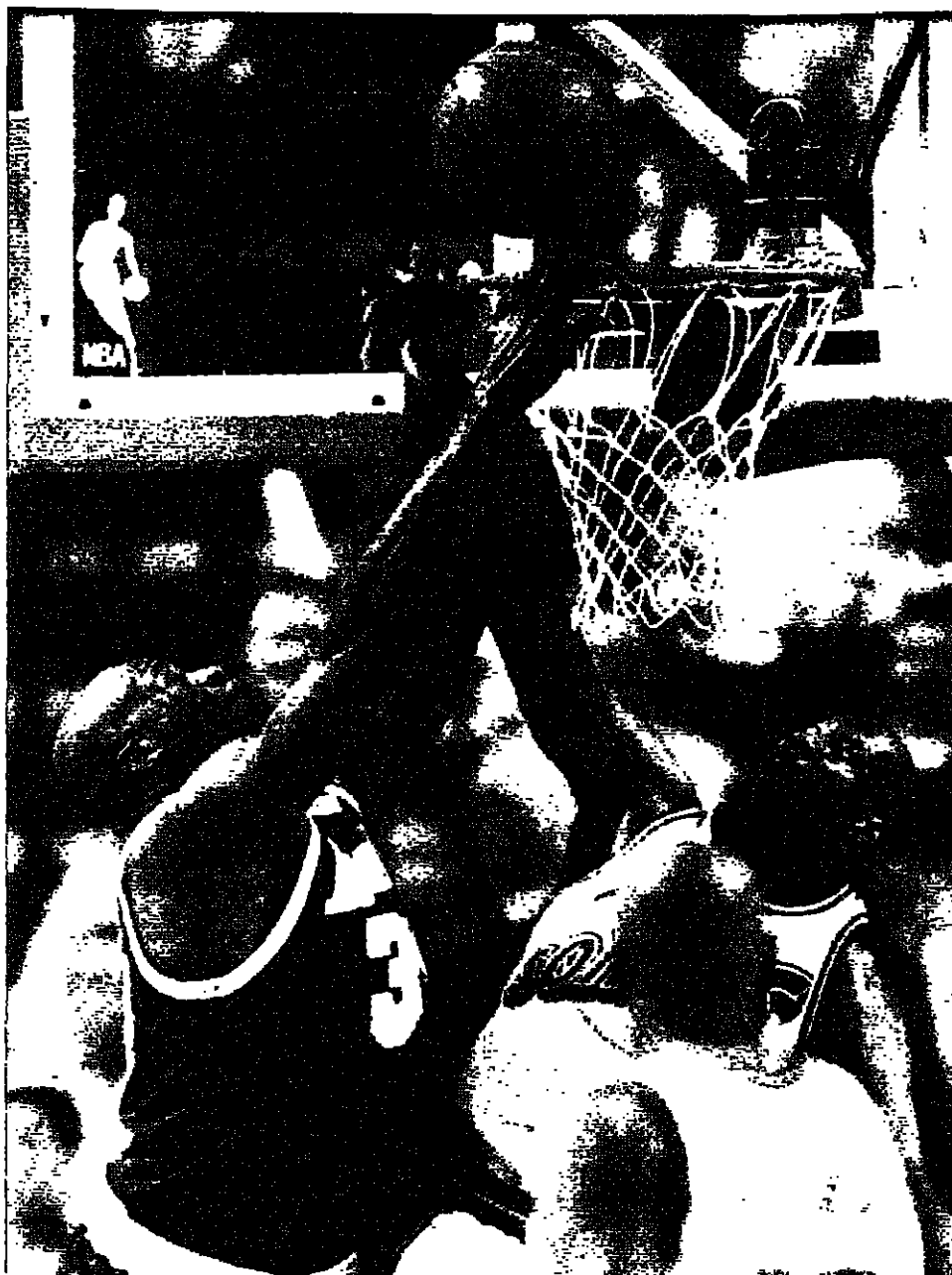
Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer							
Gold (oz's)	302.7	303.2							
Silver (oz's)	6.09	6.12							
Platinum (oz's)	396.1	396.1							
AL (3 Months)	1438	1440							
CU (3 Months)	1870	1871							
Zinc (3 Months)	1125	1126							
Lead (3 Months)	584	586							
NI (3 Months)	5820	5826							

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	P/Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	9147.82	-44.34	-0.49	9188.14	9127.39	9182.66		
New York	S&P 500	1118.17	-5.9	-0.53	1122.07	1113.7	1122.07		
London	FT-SE 100	5886.5	-23.8	-0.4	5904.6	5872.6	6010.3		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	15601.1	-40.16	-0.26	15665.8	15463.6	15641.3		
Paris	CAC 40	3844.91	-28.34	-0.74	3863.53	3831.51	3974.25		
Frankfurt	DAX	6232.03	-22.63	-0.36	6282.6	6221.71	6314.65		

Energy									
Commodity	Last	Delivery							
Coffee (c/lbs)	134.25	Spot							
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1917	Spot							
Sugar (\$/ton)	252.5	Spot							
Wheat (\$/ton)	91.8	Spot							
Soya (c/lbs)	28.47	Spot							
Tee (\$/kg)	140	Spot							
Barley (\$/bush)	0	Spot							
Rice (\$/ton)	410	Spot							

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell							
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1789	1.1848							
DE Mark	0.3972	0.3992							
CH Franc	0.4746	0.477							
FR Franc	0.1185	0.1191							
JP Yen	0.633	0.6387							
NI Guilder	0.3825	0.3843							
IT Lira	0.4025	0.4045							

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET									
HOUSING BANK CHARTER - SUBSIDIARY									
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179									
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 05/05/1998									
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
\$ 355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	14.3	1.14	39	650	112950	171.00	175.50 4.50+
2.340	1.660	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.8	4.12	8	1640	2778	1.69	1.70 -01-
3.300	1.890	MID.EAST INV.BK.	58.5	0.00	2	750	470	1.92	1.89 -03-
2.680	1.600	INDUSTRIAL DEV.BK.	8.2	8.81	6	5800	9280	1.40	1.60 -
6.150	4.660	THE HOUSING BK.	19.0	3.33	85	43427	263325	6.12	6.01 -11-
\$ 4.180	1.790	JOR. TRUST BANK	9.9	0.00	4	213	387	1.83	1.83 -
920	590	JOR. GULF BANK	3.9	10.61	2	1400	924	1.66	1.66 -
\$ 4.190	2.600	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	50.2	2.02	20	200	494	2.60	2.47 -13-
\$ 4.020	1.740	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.2	0.00	21	30475	53401	1.80	1.78 -02-
\$ 3.900	1.610	JOR. INV. FTM. BANK	9.8	0.00	1	100	153	1.61	1.53 -08-
1.400	1.800	REIT-AL-MAL (REITNA)	4.0	0.00	1	1650	1363	1.82	1.82 -
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 245.80 %CHG: -1.59 171 86305 448715									
2.400	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.9	11.79	3	800	1699	2.13	2.12 -01-
\$ 4.890	2.100	PHILADELPHIA INSUR.	10.1	0.00	2	427	897	2.20	2.10 -10-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 121.52 %CHG: -0.05 5 1327 2596									
2.240	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PMR.	9.7	5.50	2	59	117	2.00	2.00 -
\$ 5.800	2.450	HIDEX MINERALS	75.2	0.00	9	1000	200	1.44	4.99 -26-
1.550	970	WATL. PORTFOLIO	41.9	0.00	2	200	210	1.04	1.05 -01+
9.500	6.700	ALBA I	8.8	6.98	3	250	2112	8.80	8.60 -20-
1.480	1.100	MID. EAST BOTTLERS	9	0.00	3	1450	1595	1.10	1.10 -
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.22 %CHG: -0.20 13 22115 4541									
4.450	2.450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	14.6	4.47	26	44755	110155	2.46	2.46 -
\$ 7.050	5.620	ARAB POTASH CO.	27.1	3.64	1	300	1650	5.45	5.50 -15-
11.250	9.000	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.9	8.72	13	3767	38407	10.20	10.19 -01-
1.470	1.040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	11.7	6.80	9	1900	2168	1.47	1.47 -01-
\$ 5.740	3.470	JOR. TRADING HUNT.	14.3	7.79	56	20500	108500	3.35	5.28 -07+
2.940	2.250	JORDAN DAIRY	5.9	10.48	2	197	520	2.65	2.65 -
4.750	4.280	JOR. PRINT & PACK.	9	7.16	2	150	611	4.28	4.07 -21-
8.540	5.000	ARAB CHEM. SYND.	7.8	0.00	1	300	128	7.00	7.00 -
6.350	4.470	DAR AL-HANAN DV. INV.	6.9	2.15	1	1300	739	7.77	5.69 -08-
3.390	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	20.5	9.03	1	30	139	2.77	2.77 -
400	570	LIVERPOOL & POLYESTER	16.2	0.00	1	450	216	1.48	1.48 -
760	370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	0.00	0.00	3	350	139	4.00	4.00 -
\$ 3.000	920	WATL. CABLE WIRE. NYAC	27.4	0.00	1	500	570	1.14	1.14 -
730	530	JOR. SULPHO-CHROM.	27.4	0.00	4	2550	750	59	60 -03+
1.560	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	14.0	4.72	2	3000	3830	1.28	1.27 -01-
\$ 1.540	810	UNIV. MOON. INDUS.	13.6	7.06	10	5550	4720	87	85 -02-
1.200	680	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	9.3	14.49	9	2000	138	69	69 -
810	600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	11.4	11.36	4	220	44	88	86 -
1.220	870	UNION CH. & VEG.	11.0	1	1	3750	4125	1.14	1.10 -04-
860	650	JORDAN STEEL	8.2	9.94	8	7150	5222	73	73 -
570	460	MID. EAST CHEMICALS	0.00	0.00	1	10350	158	58	58 -
1.100	720	ARAB INTL. FOOD FACT.	54.9	0.00	1	2000	2000	1.00	1.00 -
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 103.67 %CHG: -1.30 258 115411 303687									
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 168.59 %CHG: +0.55 347 205058 756538									
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 05/05/1998									
\$ 1.050	910	EXPORT & FIN. BAK. 75%	16.8	0.00	2	550	363	92	91 -01-
400	480	MACH. REP. REPT. NAKA	9	0.00	8	48150	24283	52	50 -02-
530	340	JOR. TRADE FACT.	9	0.00	5	6300	2583	41	41 -
600	660	UNION INV. SOX	9	0.00	11	67100	16775	75	75 -
620	360	ARAB FTM. INVEST.	0.00	0.00	13	12000	40	7300	40 -
610	390	ARAB TRADING	39.780	0.00	2	500	328	64	67 -03+
\$ 2.220	1.050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	9	0.00	3	1250	1995	1.62	1.58 -04-
600	370	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	12	14850	7316	47	49 -02+
240	470	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	38.6	0.00	16	1600	1694	31	33 -02+
810	280	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	1	500	160	32	32 -
550	360	NAFT. MOLT. ENG. HAMICO	9	0.00	46	153973	64668	40	42 -02+
100	520	ARAB ELCT. TRD.	10.0	0.00	1	1000	168	33	33 -01+
690	580	MIDEAST PHARM. 90%	6	0.00	6	2000	1500	60	60 -
1.660	860	UNION TOBACCO 87.5%	9.8	8.17	13	1050	1481	1.53	1.53 -
550	710	RAST PHARM.	9	0.00	5	1000	66	163	163 -
450	340	INDS. ENG.	9	0.00	10	13950	3906	28	28 -
830	490	INDS. CERAMIC	12	0.00	2	900	461	50	49 -01-
380	500	ADVANCED PERSA. IND.	9	0.00	16	2225	14160	820	820 -01+
570	370	PEARL SAN. P. CONV.	9	0.00	4	21050	8420	50	50 -
\$ 710	430	WATL. POLYESTER	9	0.00	32	244200	129480	45	45 -02-
850	450	OFFICE EQUIPMENT 75%	9	0.00	6	4850	1573	55	55 -
\$ 1.310	1.000	NOTRADER	9	0.00	17	8850	8960	1.03	1.00 -03-
GRAND TOTAL 221 650240 302475									
+ : New 12 months low									
S : Stock divided during the past 12 months									
N : Listed during the past 12 months									
P : P/E ratio is 100 or more									
+ : Negative %									
- : Nothing is zero or N/A for the most recent year									



Los Angeles Lakers Shaquille O'Neal (35) and Seattle SuperSonics Jerome Kersey battle for a rebound in second quarter play in the first game of the Western Conference Semifinals at Key Arena. The Sonics won 106-92. Sonics Vin Baker is in foreground (Reuters photo)

Payton sparks Sonics past Lakers

SEATTLE (AFP) — Gary Payton scored 25 points and the Seattle SuperSonics dominated the fourth quarter to defeat the Los Angeles Lakers 106-92 here Monday in the opener of their playoff series.

The Sonics shrugged off their narrow escape in the first round of the National Basketball Association playoffs to grab a 1-0 lead in the second round best-of-seven Western Conference matchup.

The Sonics outscored the Lakers 28-13 in the fourth quarter for the triumph after the Lakers outscored Seattle 29-16 in the third. "We got aggressive in the fourth quarter and everything worked out," said Payton, who helped Seattle rally from the brink of elimination with two first-round victories over Minnesota.

The Lakers and Sonics finished with identical records, but Seattle claimed the Pacific Division title, and home-court advantage in their series, by winning three of four regular-season meetings.

"This is a heated rivalry," Payton said. "We both know we're good clubs. We had the same record. We know they are going to make a lot of adjustments and play with a lot of urgency."

Seattle reserve forward Jerome Kersey, a 14-year NBA veteran and former Laker, scored 12 points and pulled down seven rebounds.

"I just worked hard, tries to stay around the boards, got some nice looks at shots," Kersey said. "You have to keep your composure and when you get the chance to make plays, you have to."

Kersey's scouting tips were instrumental in Seattle's defense shutting down Laker guards Kobe Bryant and Eddie Jones in the fourth quarter.

"You have to read Kobe and Eddie, find out little things about players in practice you can come back and use," Kersey said. Hersey Hawkins added 20 points for

Seattle. Shaquille O'Neal led the Lakers with 27 points and 11 rebounds. The Sonics outscored the taller Lakers and could pull ahead 2-0 in the series here on Wednesday.

"Our team will see how big it's going to be," Sonics coach George Karl said. "They don't want to give us a 2-0 lead. They will fight as hard as they have ever fought."

Two more second-round series begin Tuesday, with Indiana hosting New York in the Eastern Conference and Utah playing host to San Antonio in the Western Conference.

The Pacers, guided by first-year coach Larry Bird, won 2 of 3 over the Knicks in the regular season. Indiana is led by guard Reggie Miller, who averages 25.4 points in playoff games against the rival Knicks.

"We're going to be in for a war of a series," Indiana guard Mark Jackson said. "They are a tough physical team and they don't give up."

Injured New York center Patrick Ewing is expected to miss the first two games of the series but might return from torn right wrist ligaments that have kept him out since December.

Regular-season champion Utah, which was extended to the five-game limit by Houston in round one, takes on a squad paced by three seven-foot players, including veteran David Robinson and NBA Rookie of the Year Tim Duncan.

Reigning champion Chicago carries a 1-0 lead into game two against Charlotte on Wednesday as NBA scoring leader Michael Jordan, NBA rebound leader Dennis Rodman and versatile Scottie Pippen continue their quest for a sixth NBA crown in four years.

"Michael is going to score his 30-some points," Charlotte's Vlade Divac said. "You have to concentrate on the other people and not let them kill you."

Rain wipes out first day at U.S. Red Clay Championships

CORAL SPRINGS (AFP) — Rain halted the opening matches of the \$245,000 ATP America's Red Clay Championships here Monday.

Only three matches began before showers started, postponing further play until Tuesday, when top seed and defending champion Jason Stoltenberg of Australia is set to face compatriot qualifier Andrew Ilie.

Armenia's Sargis Sargsian led eighth seed Davide Sanguineti of Italy 6-3, 4-2, when play was halted. Ramon Delgado of Paraguay led Norwegian

Christian Ruud 6-3, 4-5, when their matches were halted. In the only other match under way, Belgium's Johan Van Herck won a first-set tie-breaker over Spain's Juan Antonio Marin but lost the first game of the second set.

Asian crisis hits lucrative Olympic programme

SYDNEY (AFP) — The downward spiral of many Asian currencies has hit sales of the Sydney Olympic's most lucrative promotion — a commemorative coin programme.

It was expected to reap at least A\$250 million (\$168 million), with royalties adding millions more, but the regional crisis has forced the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) to change its sales tack.

The second batch of a collection that will eventually total 52 coins was released here Tuesday and includes one gold, two silver and three bronze-aluminium coins.

Perth Mint chief executive Don Mackay-Coghill said sales of the gold coins were higher than expected, but silver and bronze were down. Asia was a particularly hard place to forecast,

Mackay-Coghill said.

China, Japan and Taiwan were markets where sales were expected to go well but South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines had been particularly hard hit but the region's financial turmoil.

Marketing of the coins would be altered accordingly, he said.

Mackay-Coghill said the base metal (bronze-aluminium) coin was forecast to be a particularly hot item in China, although the gold and silver would be hit by high import duties.

"(The Chinese) see the coins as hard assets and investment opportunities," he said.

The new gold coin features a track-suited athlete and sells for 380 dollars.

One of the silver coins, costing \$49, was partly

designed by Nova Peris-Kneebone, who became the first Aboriginal athlete to win Olympic women's hockey team in Atlanta.

It depicts the arrival of early European settlers and is titled "A Sea Change". Another silver coin features two white-pointer sharks.

The bronze-aluminium coins, at \$26.85, are dedicated to cycling, soccer and triathlon.

Six more batches will be released in the lead-up to the 2000 Games.

The National Olympic Committees of 43 countries are associated with the program, each receiving three per cent of the wholesale price of the coins sold in their countries.

United shrug off title blues to rout Leeds

LONDON (AFP) —

Manchester United, who lost their Premiership crown to Arsenal 24 hours earlier, showed their determination to end a disappointing season on a high with a 3-0 win over bitter rivals Leeds on Monday. Arsenal denied United a third consecutive league title — and a fifth in six years — when they trounced Everton 4-0 at Highbury, sparking wild celebrations in north London and despair in Manchester.

But Alex Ferguson's side, who will finish the season trophy-less for only the second time this decade, showed they had lost none of their motivation as they tore into George Graham's Leeds.

Ryan Giggs struck with an early header before a Denis Irwin penalty and a David Beckham volley wrapped up a comfortable win over Leeds who had Norwegian Gunnar Halle sent off for a second bookable offence on 63 minutes. The Red Devils took the lead after just six minutes following superb work by Gary Neville on the right flank.

The England full-back did superbly to keep the ball in play before advancing into the area and timing his cross to perfection for Giggs who



Manchester United soccer star Andy Cole (L) shoots past Leeds United's David Wetherall (R) as Gary Kelly looks on during their match in Manchester. Manchester United defeated Leeds United 3-0 (Reuters photo)

buried a simple header for his 50th league goal and ninth of the season.

For a team that normally prides itself on defence, it was the eighth goal Leeds had conceded in four games

and considering they had not scored themselves at Old Trafford since the Premiership began in 1992, the prospects looked bleak from then on.

The second goal came on

the half-hour from a harmless-looking cross as Irwin floated a ball into the Leeds box, which led to Austrian centre-half Martin Hiden climbing all over the back of

Teddy Sheringham.

Referee Gary Willard had no hesitation in pointing to the spot and up stepped Irwin to side-foot home his fourth goal this term, sending Nigel Martyn the wrong way.

Leeds — still needing a point to be cast-iron certainties of playing in next season's UEFA Cup — never troubled keeper Raimond van der Gouw during the opening 45 minutes. It was not until the 48th minute that van der Gouw finally had a shot to save, although Australian striker Harry Kewell's 25-yard shot was directed straight at the Dutchman.

But any hopes of an unlikely Leeds fightback were killed off by England midfielder Beckham who made it 3-0 in the 59th minute. Andy Cole's cross from the left glanced off the head of Hiden and Beckham crashed a sweet right-foot volley from 18 yards beyond Martyn.

Leeds' afternoon went from bad to worse in the 63rd minute when Norwegian international Halle was given his marching orders after a late challenge from behind on debutant Wes Brown.

Del Piero to stay with Juventus

MILAN (AFP) — Alessandro Del Piero is about to kill off recent speculation surrounding a possible move to England by signing a new contract with Juventus.

The broad lines of the new deal were set out during a weekend meeting between Del Piero's agent Claudio Pasqualin and the club's top three officials — Roberto Bettega, Luciano Moggi and Antonio Giraudo.

Del Piero will earn around \$4 million a season for five seasons, using Pasqualin's argument that he is Italy's answer to Ronaldo and should therefore be paid something like the Brazilian's wages.

The deal will be a blow to English Premiership sides like Manchester United, who were hoping Juventus would part with their star player — just as the club had done in the past with Roberto Baggio and Gianluca Vialli.

Del Piero has had his best-ever season with the reigning champions — his 31 goals powering Juventus towards their third league title in four years and this month's European Cup final against Real Madrid.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

McRae leads in Rally of Corsica

AJACCIO (AFP) — Scotsman Colin McRae increased his lead to 42.5 seconds after the opening three stages on Tuesday, the second day of the Rally of Corsica. McRae, driving a Subaru Impreza, won stages seven and eight on Tuesday morning to increase his advantage by over 20 seconds. Spaniard Carlos Sainz, in a Toyota Corolla, won the ninth stage — the third of Tuesday's six specials — to move into second place ahead of Italian Piero Liatti (Subaru) and Frenchman Francois Delecour (Peugeot 306 Maxi). McRae made the most of his good fortune. He was disqualified on Monday after a tyre violation, but was reinstated on appeal. World champion Tommi Makinen of Finland did not survive the first day. His Mitsubishi, which had been setting the early pace, dropped out at the start of the fifth stage. The rally features 399.18km of special stages and covers a total of 1,544.87km over fast, rugged undulating roads before finishing late on Wednesday.

Piccirillo takes WBU crown

CATANIA (AFP) — Michele Piccirillo was crowned the new World Boxing Union (WBU) welterweight champion here on Monday night when the challenger beat fellow Italian Alessandro Duran by a technical knockout in the fifth round. Duran was close to being knocked out in the third, but pulled through until the fifth, when he offered no defence to Piccirillo's final battering. The referee stopped the fight just as Duran's manager threw in the towel. Former European champion Piccirillo now has a 26-1 record, while Duran dropped to 44-8.

EF Language surges into lead

BALTIMORE (AFP) — Overall leader EF Language, skipped by Paul Cayard, had surged into the lead in the Whitbread Round-The-World race by early Tuesday, but only 10.3 nautical miles separated all nine yachts on the eighth leg. The fleet elected to take the safe route across the Atlantic Ocean, heading south into the Gulf Stream rather than taking the shorter — and considerably more dangerous — Great Circle route to the north. The fleet set sail on Sunday from Annapolis on the 3,390-nautical mile leg to La Rochelle in France. Gunnar Krantz's Swedish Match was in second place at the 0600GMT report, one

mile behind EF Language, with Dutch entry BrunelSunergy third.

Francis to be offered new deal

BIRMINGHAM (AFP) — Former England international striker Trevor Francis is to be offered a new contract as manager of English first division club Birmingham City despite the club missing out on a promotion playoff spot. Club chairman David Gold said Tuesday that he will offer Francis a new two-year deal that would keep him at St. Andrews until the year 2000. "Trevor has done a super job and we would like to keep him here," Gold said. "I am sure that we will come to a satisfactory conclusion."

Zetterberg Belgian Footballer of the Year

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Swedish midfielder player Par Zetterberg was Tuesday named Belgian Footballer of the Year in a poll of his fellow professionals. Zetterberg, 27, who plays for Anderlecht, won the honour for the second straight year and the third time overall. The Anderlecht skipper topped the poll with 474 points to finish well clear of Branko Strupar, the Croatian who plays for RC Genk (243 pts) and veteran Belgian international midfielder Franky Van der Elst of FC Brugge (179 pts). Zetterberg also won the fair play award, while Eric Gerets was named Coach of the Year for leading FC Brugge to the league title and the Belgian Cup final.

Things go from bad to worse for Real

MADRID (AFP) — Real Madrid slumped to a shock 2-0 home defeat against visiting Zaragoza Monday night — putting increased pressure on themselves if they want to finish runners-up to Barcelona and ensure a place in the European Champions league next season. Barcelona have already won the first division title and are a massive 13 points clear of second-placed Athletic Bilbao. Monday's defeat puts Real one point behind Athletic Bilbao and only one point clear of Real Sociedad, Mallorca and Betis who are all still in with a chance of taking the number two spot. Real, who could also qualify for the European Champions League if they beat Italian giants Juventus in this season's final, were rocked by a penalty on the hour from Jamelli while Gustavo Lopez put the issue beyond doubt with a second goal for the visitors with ten minutes left to play.

Sports

SCOREBOARD

National League	
San Francisco	8
Los Angeles	7
Colorado	4
Arizona	4
San Diego	3
Florida	3
Minnesota	2
Philadelphia	1
Los Angeles	1
NY Yankees	1
Milwaukee	1

American League	
White Sox	8
Oakland	7
Anaheim	4
Toronto	3

National Hockey League	
First round playoffs series best of 7	
Western Conference quarterfinals	
Edmonton	4
Calgary	3
Edmonton wins series, 4-3	

Spanish First Division	
Real Madrid	1
Zaragoza	0

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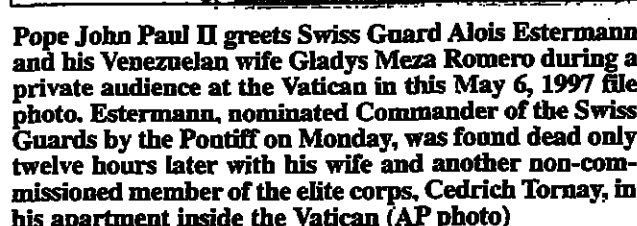
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Probe, autopsy conducted by Vatican authorities

Since 1970, the Swiss Guard has been the only armed corps in Vatican City. Pope Paul VI dissolved his armies, the gen-

Only St. Peter's Basilica and the square are patrolled by Italian police, which is why the 1981 attempt on the Pope's life in the square was investigated by state police.



LOS ANGELES (AP)—After reading the "Titanic" script three times, Kate Winslet says she felt that the only person she could play opposite with was Leonardo DiCaprio. "I first called the director and cried on the phone and said, 'You have to use me. I have to do it, you're really mad if you don't cast me,' and then I went to Leo and persuaded him," says Winslet of the role that has made her a household name. "I found him at a film festival and cornered him and told him that I saw the whole movie unfold as it was written."

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Spike Lee's latest film, "He Got Game," topped the U.S. box-office over the weekend, pulling in \$7.6 million, the specialised firm Exhibitor Relations said Monday. "City of Angels" — inspired by Wim Wenders's "Wings of Desire" — came in second with \$6.6, ahead of "The Big Hit" with 5.8 million, and "Les Miserables," which made five million dollars. "Titanic," which has shattered box-office records since its

LONDON (AFP) — Hollywood actor Dan Aykroyd has traced his family's roots back to 14th century England, and it's no mean ancestry. According to *The Times* newspaper, the "Blues Brothers" star can sketch his ties back to Sir Harry Aykroyd, High Sheriff of York in the early 14th century. The paper said 20th-century Aykroyd had "fallen in love" with his distant homeland and was checking out his forebears' ancient hamlets.

NEW YORK (AP) — I am Madonna, hear me roar. The once Material Girl bristles at the suggestion that the world might be different if women ran it. "Women do run the world!" she told the Daily News on Sunday. "They just don't shout about it. There are different ways to be powerful. It's a man's nature to be outward and aggressive. That doesn't mean that women can't be like that, too."

PARIS (AFP) — The Experience Music Project, a museum dedicated to Jimi Hendrix, has bought 19 previously unreleased audio tapes of the legendary guitarist in action. The recordings were made at four concerts Hendrix gave at Fillmore East in New York on New Year's Eve 1969 and New Year's Day 1970. Hendrix's estate said the museum had bought the tapes for an undisclosed sum at an auction.

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Are you ready for "Shaq and the Beanstalk"? Or, perhaps "Shaq and Jill"? Scholastic Inc., announced Monday it has reached agreement with Los Angeles Lakers star Shaquille O'Neal to create a children's collection of "fractured" fairy tales. "Shaq and the Beanstalk and Six Other Very Tall Tales," intended for children aged 6 to 9, will be published by Scholastic in fall, 1999. The book features an oversized, "very tall" format, with each of the seven tales linked by a clue or character leading readers from one story to the next.

Arafat briefs King on London

AMMAN (Fena) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday received a phone call from President Yasser Arafat, who briefed him on some of the London talks. President Arafat expressed his satisfaction with the U.S. administration's commitment to pursue its efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement and confirmed his acceptance of the U.S. proposal. He also attended a Washington meeting on May 11 and affirmed his satisfaction and support for the U.S. position. Also on Wednesday, King Hussein met with the Armed Forces headquarters, headed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell. The King was accompanied by Field Marshal Abdul Hafeez Mirza, Pakistan's senior military official.

Volume 23 Number 6832

Netanyahu Clinton's Arafat visits A

Netanyahu: Ross must visit again before Washington

Combined agency
dispatches

ISRAEL'S PRIME minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on Wednesday warned he would reject an invitation to attend Mideast talks in Washington if the Americans tried to dictate the scope of a Israeli troop withdrawal.

Mr Netanyahu convened a 15-member inner cabinet to discuss what the left press characterised as the U.S. ultimatum: Israeli acceptance of an U.S. proposal 15 per cent withdrawal or cancellation of a 1994 peace ceremony on the way to equal final status with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu was linked to the U.S. press "then I am sure that this summit is to be".

"I think the thing is that the state is to us on security and we can decide our security and our future."

While House Speaker Michael McClellan told Mr Netanyahu he was free to say anything he wants to, if he wants to work very patiently with us and will continue to work with us.

He does not accept direct negotiations said Netanyahu.

The full cabinet of 17 ministers was expected to make the final decision on the U.S. proposal on Sunday.

The Secretary of State James Baker said that the U.S. accepted the U.S. proposal, U.S. President Bill Clinton said he would provide over the coming Monday of a new round of Middle East talks on the toughest issues; the peace of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements, Palestinian demands for a state and refugees.

Clinton said Tuesday night he would go to Washington, Mr. Netanyahu said, "I don't know the possibility that I might not go if there are too many strings attached."

It is possible, Do I have to accept every invitation under every condition?" Mr. Netanyahu said.

Mr. McCurry said he was drawn into a said: "We are an equal participant with this having to be a decision on whether to proceed."

"We have a here and given in which we the make progress."

Later on Wednesday Netanyahu said that Channel Two's U.S. Middle East correspondent Ross should continue to continue to the extent of an Israeli redeployment.

"I think that I must come to the issue of the pullback of the pullback of the doesn't come as possible, I don't can organise this Washington Middle Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu's agreed in principle one further with the West Bank p

(Continued on page 10)

U.S. leaders reach deals with Middle East

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. administration officials are in the final stages of talks to Jewish leaders and Arab Americans today, seeking to gain support at home for a controversial push to the peace process.

The Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said that Albright was to be in New York by phone from London, with leaders of the New York-based Conference of Presidents of the American Jewish Community, who have urged her not to withdraw from land it considers vital to its security.

President Bill Clinton is expected to be in New York, and is expected to be at a conference of American Jewish leaders here today evening as the administration was in a race against time to win concessions from Israel.

The stage set for a pre-break agreement Monday, the battle to American public opinion and interests, which could influence the outcome of the latest U.S. initiative.

The nation's essential newspapers, the New York Times, Washington Post, and U.S. plan in collaboration with Mr. Netanyahu, to put the onus upon him to advance the moment to advance "Israel should a withdrawal plan by Washington," New York Times concession was endanger Israeli and it would peace talks."

For the U.S. administration, which has prime mover and the peace process, mediating effort closely linked to concerns.

As Mr. Clinton stepped up pressure on Mr. Netanyahu to the troop withdrawal, U.S. president is confronted with increasingly active effort from Jewish AIPAC, the Israeli group, to persuade 81 of U.S. senators to letter to Mr. Clinton.

CAIRO (AFP) — An Israeli who swam across the Red Sea to Egypt and asked for asylum will be detained for 15 days under orders from military prosecutors, judicial officials said Tuesday.

Mordechai Levy, 33, of the northern Israeli city of Tiberias, swam the short distance from the Red Sea resort of Eilat to Taba Port in Egypt Sunday and demanded asylum "for personal considerations," an Israeli embassy spokesman said Monday.

The Suez area military prosecutors ordered Mr. Levy held for 15 days when he appeared before them Tuesday, the officials said.

"He is charged with illegal entry" and "is currently being interrogated by the prosecutors," the officials said.

The Israeli embassy spokesman said, "He asked asylum for personal consideration. It is not a political issue. It is an administrative issue of no significance."

"Levy is now in detention. Our consul is taking care of this case, and we hope he will be released soon," the spokesman said, adding that he expected Mr. Levy to be returned to Israel "because he has no visa."

Coast guard sources, quoted by the government Al Akhbar newspaper Monday, said that Mr. Levy "escaped from the brutality of the Israeli regime and asked for asylum in Egypt."

Al Akhbar said that Mr. Levy did not carry any identity card but three books of the Torah were found strapped to his body.

PLACATING SPIRITS: A young girl keeps her balance on a stilt during a parade on Hong Kong's outlying Cheung Chau island Tuesday, to celebrate the Bun Festival. The festival is held annually by the islanders to placate the spirits of those who were killed by pirates during the turn of the century. (AP photo)

Pakistan's top scientist denies offering Iraq nuclear bomb plans

They called on Arab and Muslim states to authorise flights to Baghdad and to helping the United States to maintain embargoes against Iraq, Libya and Sudan," he said.

Khan said that he suspected Iraq wouldn't have the technology to put a bomb together even if it was given a design.

Netanyahu. will not support him.
"There is no such thing as most of the party platform on fighting the coercion of the minority religious par- while Mr. Netanyahu would take 35 per cent and. Mr. Barak 27 per cent.

Mr. Milo hopes to win over right-wingers frustrated with Mr. Netanyahu's peace policies but will focus most of the party platform

most of the party platform on fighting the coercion of the minority religious par-

all, 1999. The book features an oversized, "very tall" format, with each of the seven tales linked by a clue or char-

1990